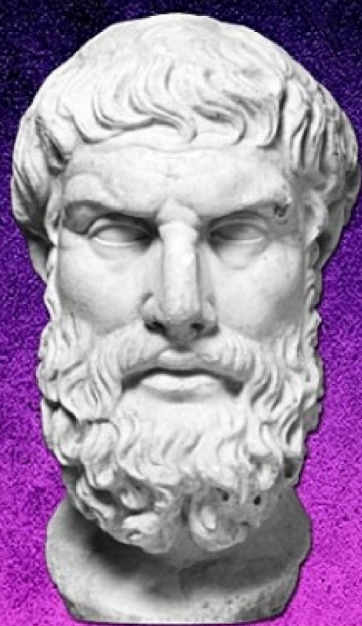




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The Complete Works of
LUCRETIUS

(c. 99 BC – c. 55 BC)



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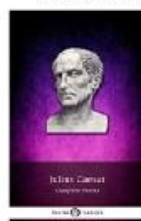
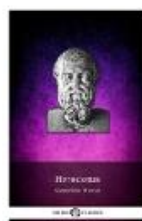
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LUCRETIUS by William Young Sellar



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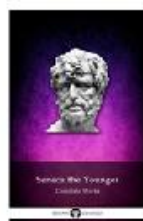
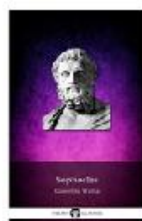
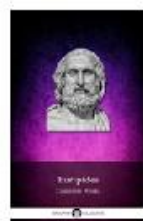
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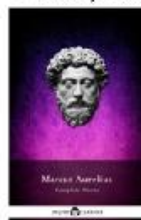
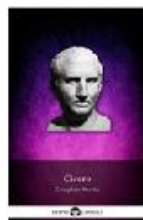
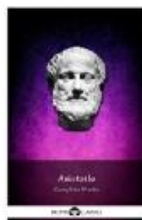
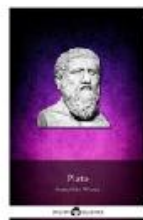
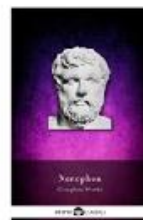
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The Complete Works of
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The Translations



Ancient Roman forum — virtually nothing is known about the life of Lucretius. He was probably a member of the aristocratic gens Lucretia and his work reveals an intimate knowledge of a luxurious lifestyle in Rome.

ON THE NATURE OF THINGS: PROSE TRANSLATION



Translated by H. A. J. Munro

Lucretius (Titus Lucretius Carus) lived c. 99–c. 55 BC, but the details of his career are unknown. His *De rerum natura* is a first-century BC didactic poem composed with the purpose of explaining Epicurean philosophy to a Roman audience. Written in approximately 7,400 dactylic hexameters, the epic poem is divided into six untitled books, exploring Epicurean physics through richly poetic language and metaphors. Throughout the work, Lucretius presents the principles of atomism, the nature of the mind and soul, with explanations of sensation and thought. The work considers the development of the world and its phenomena, while exploring a variety of celestial and terrestrial phenomena. The universe described in the poem operates according to these physical principles, guided by fortuna, “chance,” and not the divine intervention of the traditional Roman deities.

According to Epicurean thought, the unhappiness and degradation of humans arose largely from the dread which they entertained of the power of the deities, from terror of their wrath, which was supposed to be displayed by the misfortunes inflicted in this life, by the everlasting tortures that were the lot of the guilty in a future state, or where these feelings were not strongly developed, from a vague dread of gloom and misery after death. To remove these fears and establish tranquillity in the heart, was the purpose of Epicurus’ teaching. Thus the deities, whose existence he did not deny, lived forevermore in the enjoyment of absolute peace, strangers to all the passions, desires and fears, which agitate the human heart, totally indifferent to the world and its inhabitants, unmoved alike by their virtues and their crimes. To prove this position he called upon the atomism of Democritus, by which he sought to demonstrate that the material universe was formed not by a Supreme Being, but by the mixing of elemental particles that had existed from all eternity governed by certain simple laws. The task undertaken by Lucretius was to clearly state and fully develop these views in an engaging form. His epic poem attempts to show that everything in nature can be explained by natural laws without the need for the intervention of divine beings.

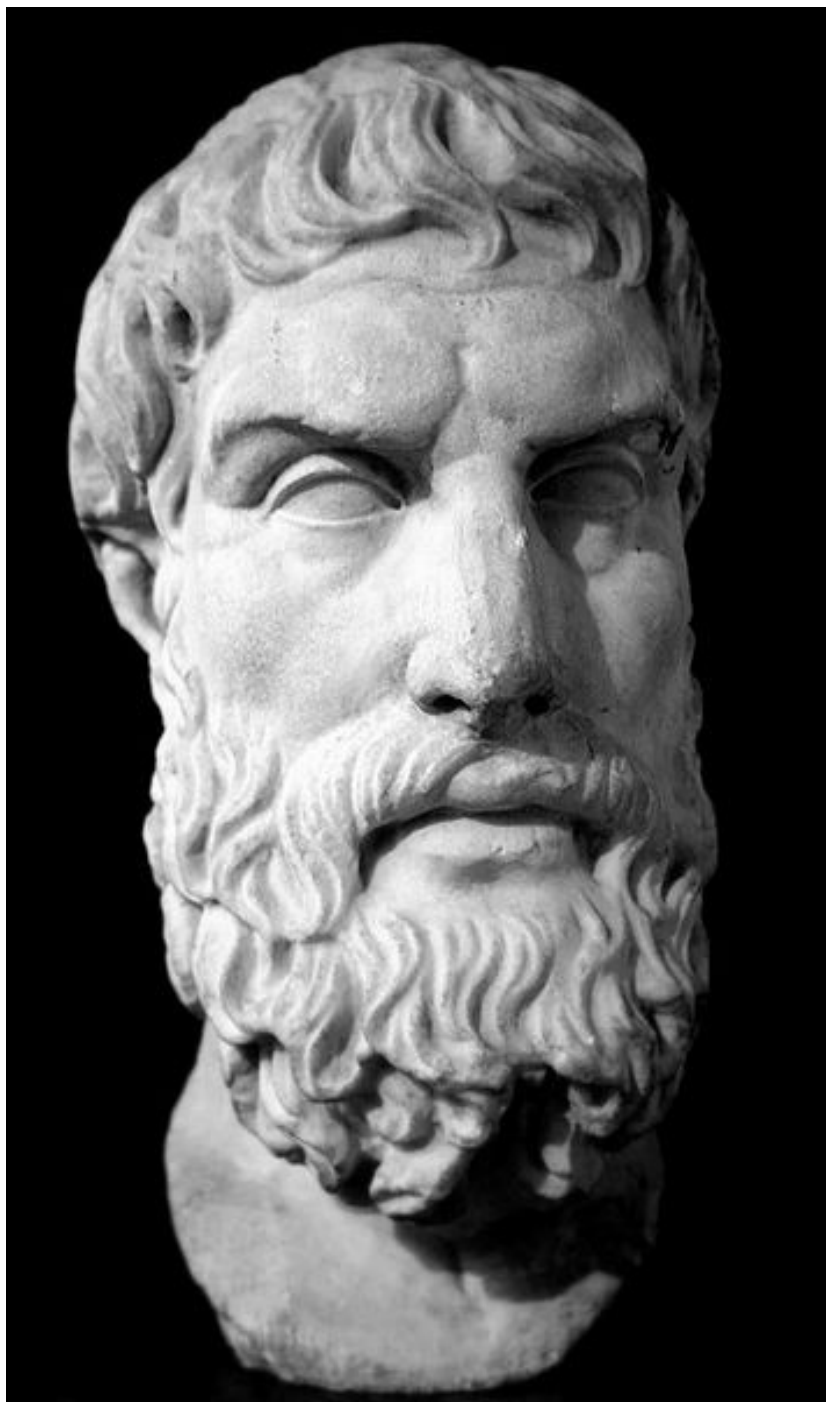
Lucretius identifies the supernatural with the notion that the deities created our world or interfere with its operations in some way. He argues against fear of such deities by demonstrating through observations and arguments that the operations of the world can be accounted for in terms of natural phenomena

— the regular, but purposeless motions and interactions of tiny atoms in empty space. He argues against the fear of death by stating that death is the dissipation of a being's material mind. The poet uses the analogy of a vessel, stating that the physical body is the vessel that holds both the mind (*mens*) and spirit (*anima*) of a human being. Neither the mind nor spirit can survive independent of the body. Therefore, Lucretius states that once the vessel (the body) shatters (dies) its contents (mind and spirit) can no longer exist. As a simple ceasing-to-be, death can be neither good nor bad for this being. Being completely devoid of sensation and thought, a dead person cannot miss being alive. According to Lucretius, fear of death is a projection of terrors experienced in life, of pain that only a living (intact) mind can feel.

The first three books provide a fundamental account of being and nothingness, matter and space, the atoms and their movement, the infinity of the universe both as regards time and space, the regularity of reproduction (no prodigies, everything in its proper habitat), the nature of mind (*animus*, directing thought) and spirit (*anima*, sentience) as material bodily entities, and their mortality, since, according to Lucretius, they and their functions (consciousness, pain) end with the bodies that contain them and with which they are interwoven. The last three books give an atomic and materialist explanation of phenomena preoccupying human reflection, such as vision and the senses, sex and reproduction, natural forces and agriculture, the heavens and disease.

Lucretius addressed his epic poem to "Memmius", who has been identified as Gaius Memmius, a praetor that in 58 BC was a judicial official deciding controversies between citizens and the government. There are over a dozen references to "Memmius" scattered throughout the long poem in a variety of contexts in translation, such as "Memmius mine", "my Memmius", and "illustrious Memmius". According to Lucretius's frequent statements in his poem, the main purpose of the work was to free Gaius Memmius's mind of the supernatural and the fear of death — and to induct him into a state of *ataraxia* by expounding the philosophical system of Epicurus, whom Lucretius glorifies as the hero of his epic poem.

The *De rerum natura* had a considerable influence on the Augustan poets, particularly with Virgil in his *Aeneid* and *Georgics*, and to a lesser extent on the *Satires* and *Eclogues* and with Horace's works. However, the epic poem virtually disappeared during the Middle Ages and was only rediscovered in 1417 in a monastery in Germany by the Florentine scholar Poggio Bracciolini. From then on, *De rerum natura* played an important role both in the development of atomism and the efforts of various figures of the Enlightenment era to construct a new Christian humanism.



Roman marble bust of Epicurus (341–270 BC)

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T. LUCRETII CARI
DE
RERUM NATURA
Liber Primus.



ENEADUM genetrix, hominum di-
vumque voluptas,
Alma Venus, coeli subter labentia
signa

Quæ mare navigerum, quæ terras fru-
giferentis.

Concelebras : per te quoniam genus omne animantium
Concipitur, visitque exortum lumina solis :
Te, Dea, te fugiunt venti, te nubila coeli,
Adventumque tuum : tibi suavis dædala tellus
Summittit flores, tibi rident æquora ponti,
Placatumque nitet diffuso lumine coelum.
Nam simul ac species patefacta 'st verna diei,
Exreferata viget genitabilis aura Favoni :
Aeris primum volucres te, diva, tuumque
Significant initum percussæ corda tua vi.
Inde feræ pecudes persultant pabula læta,
Et rapidos tranant amneis : ita capta lepore,
Illecebrisque tuis omnis natura animantium

B

Te



Opening of 'De rerum natura', 1483 copy by Girolamo di Matteo de Tauris for Pope Sixtus IV

BOOK I.

[1] MOTHER of the Aeneadae, darling of men and gods, increase-giving Venus, who beneath the gliding signs of heaven fillest with thy presence the ship-carrying sea, the corn-bearing lands, since through thee every kind of living things is conceived, rises up and beholds the light of the sun.

Before thee, goddess, flee the winds, the clouds of heaven, before thee and thy advent; for thee earth, manifold in works, puts forth sweet-smelling flowers; for thee the levels of the sea do laugh and heaven propitiated shines with outspread light.

For soon as the vernal aspect of day is disclosed, and the birth-favoring breeze of Favonius unbarred is blowing fresh, first the fowls of the air, O lady, show signs of thee and thy entering in, thoroughly smitten in heart by thy power.

Next the wild herds bound over the glad pastures and swim the rapid rivers: in such wise each made prisoner by thy charms follows thee with desire, whither thou goest to lead it on.

Yes, throughout seas and mountains and sweeping rivers and leafy homes of birds and grassy plains, striking fond love into the breasts of all thou constrainest them each after its kind to continue their races with desire.

Since thou then art sole mistress of the nature of things and without thee nothing rises up into the divine borders of light, nothing grows to be glad or lovely, fain would I have thee for a helpmate in writing the verses which I essay to pen on the nature of things for our own son of the Memmii, whom thou, goddess, hast willed to have no peer, rich as he ever is in every grace.

Wherefore all the more, O lady, lend my lays an everliving charm.

Cause meanwhile the savage works of war to be lulled to rest throughout all seas and lands; [30] for thou alone canst bless mankind with calm peace, seeing that Mavors lord of battle controls the savage works of war, Mavors who often flings himself into thy lap quite vanquished by the never-healing wound of love; and then with upturned face and shapely neck thrown back feeds with love his greedy sight gazing, goddess, open-mouthed on thee; and as backward he reclines, his breath stays hanging on thy lips While then, lady, he is reposing on thy holy body, shed thyself about him and above, and pour from thy lips sweet discourse, asking, glorious dame, gentle peace for the Romans.

For neither can we in our country's day of trouble with untroubled mind think only of our work, nor can the illustrious offset of Memmius in times like these be wanting to the general weal.

For what remains to tell, apply to true reason un-busied ears and a keen mind withdrawn from cares, lest my gifts set out for you with steadfast zeal you abandon with disdain, before they are understood.

For I will essay to discourse to you of the most high system of heaven and

the gods and will open up the first beginnings of things, out of which nature gives birth to all things and increase and nourishment, and into which nature likewise dissolves them back after their destruction.

These we are accustomed in explaining their 'reason to call matter and begetting bodies of things and to name seeds of things and also to tern first bodies, because from them as first elements all things are.

When human life to view lay foully prostrate upon earth crushed down under the weight of religion, who showed her head from the quarters of heaven with hideous aspect lowering upon mortals, a man of Greece ventured first to lift up his mortal eyes to her face and first to withstand her to her face.

Him neither story of gods nor thunderbolts nor heaven with threatening roar could quell: they only chafed the more the eager courage of his soul, filling him with desire to be the first to burst the fast bars of nature's portals.

Therefore the living force of his soul gained the day: on he passed far beyond the flaming walls of the world and traversed throughout in mind and spirit the immeasurable universe; whence he returns a conqueror to tell us what can, what cannot come into being; in short on what principle each thing has its powers defined, its deep-set boundary mark.

Therefore religion is put underfoot and trampled upon in turn; [77] us his victory brings level with heaven.

This is what I fear herein, lest haply you should fancy that you are entering on unholy grounds of reason and treading the path of sin; whereas on the contrary often and often that very religion has given birth to sinful and unholy deeds.

Thus in Aulis the chosen chieftains of the Danaï, foremost of men, foully polluted with Iphianassa's blood the altar of the Trivian maid.

Soon as the fillet encircling her maiden tresses shed itself in equal lengths down each cheek, and soon as she saw her father standing sorrowful before the altars and beside him the ministering priests hiding the knife and her countrymen at sight of her shedding tears, speechless in terror she dropped down on her knees and sank to the ground.

Nor aught in such a moment could it avail the luckless girl that she had first bestowed the name of father on the king.

For lifted up in the hands of the men she was carried shivering to the altars, not after due performance of the customary rites to be escorted by the clear-ringing bridal song, but in the very season of marriage, stainless maid mid the stain of blood, to fall a sad victim by the sacrificing stroke of a father, that thus a happy and prosperous departure might be granted to the fleet.

So great the evils to which religion could prompt! You yourself some time or other overcome by the terror-speaking tales of the seers will seek to fall away from us.

Ay indeed for how many dreams may they now imagine for you, enough to upset the calculations of life and trouble all your fortunes with fear! And with good cause; for if men saw that there was a fixed limit to their woes, they

would be able in some way to withstand the religious scruples and threatenings of the seers.

As it is, there is no way, no means of resisting, since they must fear after death everlasting pains.

For they cannot tell what is the nature of the soul, whether it be born or on the contrary find its way into men at their birth, and whether it perish together with us when severed from us by death or visit the gloom of Orcus and wasteful pools or by divine decree find its way into brutes in our stead, as sang our Ennius who first brought down from delightful Helicon a crown of unfading leaf, destined to bright renown throughout Italian clans of men.

And yet with all this Ennius sets forth that there are Acherusian quarters, publishing it in immortal verses; [121] though in our passage thither neither our souls nor bodies hold together, but only certain idols pale in wondrous wise.

From these places he tells us the ghost of everliving Homer uprose before him and began to shed salt tears and to unfold in words the nature of things.

Wherefore we must well grasp the principle of things above, the principle by which the courses of the sun and moon go on, the force by which every thing on earth proceeds, but above all we must find out by keen reason what the soul and the nature of the mind consist of, and what thing it is-which meets us when awake and frightens our minds, if we are under the influence of disease; meets and frightens us too when we are buried in sleep; so that we seem to 'see and hear speaking to us face to face them who are dead, whose bones earth holds in its embrace.

Nor does my mind fail to perceive how hard it is to make clear in Latin verses the dark discoveries of the Greeks, especially as many points must be dealt with in new terms on account of the poverty of the language and the novelty of the questions.

But yet your worth and the looked-for pleasure of sweet friendship prompt me to undergo any labor and lead me on to watch the clear nights through, seeking by what words and in what verse I may be able in the end to shed on your mind so clear a light that you can thoroughly scan hidden things.

This terror then and darkness of mind must be dispelled not by the rays of the sun and glittering shafts of day, but by the aspect and the law of nature; the warp of whose design we shall begin with this first principle, nothing is ever gotten out of nothing by divine power.

Fear in sooth holds so in check all mortals, because they see many operations go on in earth and heaven, the causes of which they can in no way understand, believing them therefore to be done by power divine.

For these reasons when we shall have seen that nothing can be produced from nothing, we shall then more correctly ascertain that which we are seeking, both the elements out of which everything can be produced and the manner in which all things are done without the hand of the gods.

If things came from nothing, any kind might be born of any thing, nothing would require seed.

Men for instance might rise out of the sea, the scaly race out of the earth, and birds might burst out of the sky; [163] horned and other herds, every kind of wild beasts would haunt with changing broad tilth and wilderness alike.

Nor would the same fruits keep constant to trees, but would change; any tree might bear any fruit.

For if there were not begetting bodies for each, how could things have a fixed unvarying mother?

But in fact because things are all produced from fixed seeds, each thing is born and goes forth into the borders of light out of that in which resides its matter and first bodies; and for this reason all things cannot be gotten out of all things, because in particular things resides a distinct power.

Again, why do we see the rose put forth in spring, corn in the season of heat, vines yielding at the call of autumn, if not because, when the fixed seeds of things have streamed together at the proper time, whatever is born discloses itself, while the due seasons are there and the quickened earth brings its weakly products in safety forth into the borders of light?

But if they came from nothing, they would rise up suddenly at uncertain periods and unsuitable times of year, inasmuch as there would be no first-beginnings to be kept from a begetting union by the unpropitious season.

No nor would time be required for the growth of things after the meeting of the seed, if they could increase out of nothing.

Little babies would at once grow into men and trees in a moment would rise and spring out of the ground.

But none of these events it is plain ever comes to pass, since all things grow step by step [at a fixed time], as is natural, [since they all grow] from a fixed seed and in growing preserve their kind; so that you may be sure that all things increase in size and are fed out of their own matter.

Furthermore without fixed seasons of rain the earth is unable to put forth its gladdening produce, nor again if kept from food could the nature of living things continue its kind and sustain life; so that you may hold with greater truth that many bodies are common to many things, as we see letters common to different words, than that anything could come into being without first-beginnings.

Again why could not nature have produced men of such a size and strength as to be able to wade on foot across the sea and rend great mountains with their hands and outlive many generations of living men, if not because an unchanging matter has been assigned for begetting things and what can arise out of this matter is fixed? We must admit therefore that nothing can come from nothing, since things require seed before they can severally be born and be brought out into the buxom fields of air.

[207] Lastly, since we see that tilled grounds surpass untilled and yield a better produce by the labor of hands, we may infer that there are in the earth first-beginnings of things which by turning up the fruitful clods with the share and laboring the soil of the earth we stimulate to rise.

But if there were not such, you would see all things without any labor of ours spontaneously come forth in much greater perfection.

Moreover nature dissolves every thing back into its first bodies and does not annihilate things.

For if aught were mortal in all its parts alike, the thing in a moment would be snatched away to destruction from before our eyes; since no force would be needed to produce disruption among its parts and undo their fastenings.

Whereas in fact, as all things consist of an imperishable seed, nature suffers the destruction of nothing to be seen, until a force has encountered it sufficient to dash things to pieces by a blow or to pierce through the void places within them and break them up.

Again if time, whenever it makes away with things through age, utterly destroys them eating up all their matter, out of what does Venus bring back into the light of life the race of living things each after its kind, or, when they are brought back, out of what does earth manifold in works give them nourishment and increase, furnishing them with food each after its kind? Out of what do its own native fountains and extraneous rivers from far and wide keep full the sea? Out of what does ether feed the stars? For infinite time gone by and lapse of days must have eaten up all things which are of mortal body.

Now if in that period of time gone by those things have existed, of which this sum of things is composed and recruited, they are possessed no doubt of an imperishable body, and cannot therefore any of them return to nothing.

Again the same force and cause would destroy all things without distinction, unless everlasting matter held them together, matter more or less closely linked in mutual entanglement: a touch in sooth would be sufficient cause of death, inasmuch as any amount of force must of course undo the texture of things in which no parts at all were of an everlasting body.

But in fact, because the fastenings of first-beginnings one with the other are unlike and matter is everlasting, things continue with body uninjured, until a force is found to encounter them strong enough to overpower the texture of each thing therefore never returns to nothing, but all things after disruption go back into the first bodies of matter.

[248] Lastly, rains die, when father ether has tumbled them into the lap of mother earth; but then goodly crops spring up and boughs are green with leaves upon the trees, trees themselves grow and are laden with fruit; by them in turn our race and the race of wild beasts are fed, by them we see glad towns teem with children and the leafy forests ring on all sides with the song of new birds; through them cattle wearied with their load of fat lay their bodies down about the glad pastures and the white milky stream pours from the distended udders; through them a new brood with weakly limbs frisks and gambols over the soft grass, rapt in their young hearts with the pure new milk.

None of the things therefore which seem to be lost is utterly lost, since nature replenishes one thing out of another and does not suffer any thing to be begotten, before she has been recruited by the death of some other.

Now mark me: since I have taught that things cannot be born from nothing, cannot when begotten be brought back to nothing, that you may not haply yet begin in any shape to mistrust my words, because the first-beginnings of things cannot be seen by the eyes, take moreover this list of bodies which you must yourself admit are in the number of things and cannot be seen.

First of all the force of the wind when aroused beats on the harbors and whirls huge ships and scatters clouds; sometimes in swift whirling eddy it scourges the plains and straws them with large trees and scourges the mountain summits with forest-rending blasts: so fiercely does the wind rave with a shrill howling and rage with threatening roar.

Winds therefore sure enough are unseen bodies which sweep the seas, the lands, ay and the clouds of heaven, tormenting them and catching them up in sudden whirls.

On they stream and spread destruction abroad in just the same way as the soft liquid nature of water, when all at once it is borne along in an overflowing stream, and a great downfall of water from the high hills augments it with copious rains, flinging together fragments of forests and entire trees; nor can the strong bridges sustain the sudden force of coming water: in such wise turbid with much rain the river dashes upon the piers with mighty force: makes havoc with loud noise and rolls under its eddies huge stones: [289] wherever aught opposes its waves, down it dashes it.

In this way then must the blasts of wind as well move on, and when they like a mighty stream have borne down in any direction, they push things before them and throw them down with repeated assaults, sometimes catch them up in curling eddy and carry them away in swift-circling whirl.

Wherefore once and again I say winds are unseen bodies, since in their works and ways they are found to rival great rivers which are of a visible body.

Then again we perceive the different smells of things, yet never see them coming to our nostrils; nor do we behold heats nor can we observe cold with the eyes nor are we used to see voices.

Yet all these things must consist of a bodily nature, since they are able to move the senses; for nothing but body can touch and be touched.

Again clothes hung up on a shore which waves break upon become moist, and then get dry if spread out in the sun.

Yet it has not been seen in what way the moisture of water has sunk into them nor again in what way this has been dispelled by heat.

The moisture therefore is dispersed into small particles which the eyes are quite unable to see.

Again after the revolution of many of the sun's years a ring on the finger is thinned on the under side by wearing, the dripping from the eaves hollows a stone, the bent plowshare of iron imperceptibly decreases in the fields, and we behold the stone-paved streets worn down by the feet of the multitude; the brass statues too at the gates show their right hands to be wasted by the touch

of the numerous passers by who greet them.

These things then we see are lessened, since they have been thus worn down; but what bodies depart at any given time the nature of vision has jealously shut out our seeing.

Lastly the bodies which time and nature add to things by little and little, constraining them to grow in due measure, no exertion of the eyesight can behold; and so too wherever things grow old by age and decay, and when rocks hanging over the sea are eaten away by the gnawing salt spray, you cannot see what they lose at any given moment Nature therefore works by unseen bodies.

And yet all things are not on all sides jammed together and kept in by body: there is also void in things.

To have learned this will be good for you on many accounts; it will not suffer you to wander in doubt and be to seek in the sum of things and, distrustful of our words.

If there were not void, things could not move at all; [334] for that which is the property of body, to let and hinder, would be present to all things at all times; nothing therefore could go on, since no other thing would be the first to give way.

But in fact throughout seas and lands and the heights of heaven we see before our eyes many things move in many ways for various reasons, which things, if there were no void, I need not say would lack and want restless motion: they never would have been begotten at all, since matter jammed on all sides would have been at rest Again however solid things are thought to be, you may yet learn from this that they are of rare body: in rocks and caverns the moisture of water oozes through and all things weep with abundant drops; food distributes itself through the whole body of living things; trees grow and yield fruit in season, because food is diffused through the whole from the very roots over the stem and all the boughs.

Voices pass through walls and fly through houses shut, stiffening frost pierces to the bones.

Now if there are no void parts, by what way can the bodies severally pass? You would see it to be quite impossible.

Once more, why do we see one thing surpass another in weight though not larger in size? For if there is just as much body in a ball of wool as there is in a lump of lead, it is natural it should weigh the same, since the property of body is to weigh all things downwards, while on the contrary the nature of void is ever without weight.

Therefore when a thing is just as large, yet is found to be void in it; while on the other hand that which is lighter, it proves sure enough that it has more of 'heavier shows that there is in it more of body and that it contains within it much less of void.

Therefore that which we are seeking with keen reason exists sure enough, mixed up in things; and we call it void. And herein I am obliged to forestall

this point which some raise, lest it draw you away from the truth.

The waters they say make way for the scaly creatures as they press on, and open liquid paths, because the fish leave room behind them, into which the yielding waters may stream; thus other things too may move and change place among themselves, although the whole sum be full.

This you are to know has been taken up on grounds wholly false.

For on what side I ask can the scaly creatures move forwards, unless the waters have first made room? Again on what side can the waters give place, so long as the fish are unable to go on? ^[380] Therefore you must either strip all bodies of motion or admit that in things void is mixed up from which every thing gets its first start in moving.

Lastly if two broad bodies after contact quickly spring asunder, the air must surely fill all the void which is formed between the bodies.

Well however rapidly it stream together with swift-circling currents, yet the whole space will not be able to be filled up in one moment for it must occupy first one spot and then another, until the whole is taken up.

But if haply any one supposes that, when the bodies have started asunder, that result follows because the air condenses, he is mistaken; for a void is then formed which was not before, and a void also is filled which existed before; nor can the air condense in such a way, nor supposing it could, could it methinks without void draw into itself and bring its parts together.

Wherefore however long you hold out by urging many objections, you must needs in the end admit that there is a void in things.

And many more arguments I may state to you in order to accumulate proof on my words; but these slight footprints are enough for a keen-searching mind to enable you by yourself to find out all the rest.

For as dogs often discover by smell the lair of a mountain-ranging wild beast though covered over with leaves, when once they have got on the sure tracks, thus you in cases like this will be able by yourself alone to see one thing after another and find your way into all dark corners and draw forth the truth.

But if you lag or swerve a jot from the reality, this I can promise you, Memmius, without more ado: such plenteous draughts from abundant wellsprings my sweet tongue shall pour from my richly furnished breast, that I fear slow age will steal over our limbs and break open in us the fastnesses of life, ere the whole store of reasons on any one question has by my verses been dropped into your ears.

But now to resume the thread of the design which I am weaving in verse: all nature then, as it exists by itself, is founded on two things: there are bodies and there is void in which these bodies are placed and through which they move about.

For that body exists by itself the general feeling of man kind declares; and unless at the very first belief in this be firmly grounded, there will be nothing to which we can appeal on hidden things in order to prove anything by

reasoning of mind. [425] Then again, if room and space which we call void did not exist, bodies could not be placed anywhere nor move about at all to any side; as we have demonstrated to you a little before.

Moreover there is nothing which you can affirm to be at once separate from all body and quite distinct from void, which would so to say count as the discovery of a third nature.

For whatever shall exist, this of itself must be something or other.

Now if it shall admit of touch in however slight and small a measure, it will, be it with a large or be it with a little addition, provided it do exist, increase the amount of body and join the sum.

But if it shall be intangible and unable to hinder any thing from passing through it on any side, this you are to know will be that which we call empty void.

Again whatever shall exist by itself, will either do something or will itself suffer by the action of other things, or will be of such a nature as things are able to exist and go on in.

But no thing can do and suffer without body, nor aught furnish room except void and vacancy.

Therefore beside void and bodies no third nature taken by itself can be left in the number of things, either such as to fall at any time under the ken of our senses or such as any one can grasp by the reason of his mind.

For whatever things are named, you will either find to be properties linked to these two things or you will see to be accidents of these things.

That is a property which can in no case be disjoined and separated without utter destruction accompanying the severance, such as the weight of a stone, the heat of fire, the fluidity of water.

Slavery on the other hand, poverty and riches, liberty war concord and all other things which may come and go while the nature of the thing remains unharmed, these we are wont, as it is right we should, to call accidents.

Time also exists not by itself, but simply from the things which happen the sense apprehends what has been done in time past, as well as what is present and what is to follow after.

And we must admit that no one feels time by itself abstracted from the motion and calm rest of things.

So when they say that the daughter of Tyndarus was ravished and the Trojan nations were subdued in war, we must mind that they do not force us to admit that these things are by themselves, since those generations of men, of whom these things were accidents, time now gone by has irrevocably swept away.

[468] For whatever shall have been done may be termed an accident in one case of the Teucran people, in another of the countries simply.

Yes for if there had been no matter of things and no room and space in which things severally go on, never had the fire, kindled by love of the beauty of Tyndarus' daughter, blazed beneath the Phrygian breast of Alexander and

lighted up the famous struggles of cruel war, nor had the timber horse unknown to the Trojans wrapt Pergama in flames by its night-issuing brood of sons of the Greeks; so that you may clearly perceive that all actions from first to last exist not by themselves and are not by themselves in the way that body is, nor are terms of the same kind as void is, but are rather of such a kind that you may fairly call them accidents of body and of the room in which they severally go on.

Bodies again are partly first-beginnings of things, partly those which are formed of a union of first beginnings.

But those which are first-beginnings of things no force can quench: they are sure to have the better by their solid body.

Although it seems difficult to believe that aught can be found among things with a solid body.

For the lightning of heaven passes through the walls of houses, as well as noise and voices; iron grows red-hot in the fire and stones burn with fierce heat and burst asunder the hardness of gold is broken up and dissolved by heat; the ice of brass melts vanquished by the flame; warmth and piercing cold ooze through silver, since we have felt both, as we held cups with the hand in due fashion and the water was poured down into them.

So universally there is found to be nothing solid in things.

But yet because true reason and the nature of things constrains, attend until we make clear in a few verses that there are such things as consist of solid and everlasting body, which we teach are seeds of things and first-beginnings, out of which the whole sum of things which now exists has been produced.

First of all then since there has been found to exist a two-fold and widely dissimilar nature of two things, that is to say of body and of place in which things severally go on, each of the two must exist for and by itself and quite unmixed.

For wherever there is empty space which we call void, there body is not; wherever again body maintains itself, there empty void no wise exists.

First bodies therefore are solid and without void.

[511] Again since there is void in things begotten, solid matter must exist about this void, and no thing can be proved by true reason to conceal in its body and have within it void, unless you choose to allow that that which holds it in is solid.

Again that can be nothing but a union of matter which can keep in the void of things.

Matter therefore, which consists of a solid body, may be everlasting, though all things else are dissolved.

Moreover, if there were no empty void, the universe would be solid; unless on the other hand there were certain bodies to fill up whatever places they occupied, the existing universe would be empty and void space.

Therefore sure enough body and void are marked off in alternate layers, since the universe is neither of a perfect fulness nor a perfect void.

There are therefore certain bodies which can vary void space with full.

These can neither be broken in pieces by the stroke of blows from without nor have their texture undone by aught piercing to their core nor give way before any other kind of assault; as we have proved to you a little before.

For without void nothing seems to admit of being crushed in or broken up or split in two by cutting, or of taking in wet or permeating cold or penetrating fire, by which all things are destroyed.

And the more anything contains within it of void, the more thoroughly it gives way to the assault of these things.

Therefore if first bodies are as I have shown solid and without void, they must be everlasting.

Again unless matter had been eternal, all things before this would have utterly returned to nothing and whatever things we see would have been born anew from nothing.

But since I have proved above that nothing can be produced from nothing, and that what is begotten cannot be called to nothing, first-beginnings must be of an imperishable body, into which all things can be dissolved at their last hour, that there may be a supply of matter for the reproduction of things.

Therefore first-beginnings are of solid singleness, and in no other way can they have been preserved through ages during infinite time past in order to reproduce things.

Again if nature had set no limit to the breaking of things, by this time the bodies of matter would have been so far reduced by the breaking of past "ages that nothing could within a fixed time be conceived out of them and reach its utmost growth of being.

For we see that anything is more quickly destroyed than again renewed; [557] and therefore that which the long, the infinite duration of all bygone time had broken up demolished and destroyed, could never be reproduced in all remaining time.

But now sure enough a fixed limit to their breaking has been set, since we see each thing renewed, and at the same time definite periods fixed for things each after its kind to reach the flower of their age.

Moreover while the bodies of matter are most solid, it may yet be explained in what way all things which are formed soft, as air water earth fires, are so formed and by what force they severally go on, since once for all there is void mixed up in things.

But on the other hand if the first-beginnings of things be soft, it cannot be explained out of what enduring basalt and iron can be produced; for their whole nature will utterly lack a first foundation to begin with.

First-beginnings therefore are strong in solid singleness, and by a denser combination of these all things can be closely packed and exhibit enduring strength.

Again if no limit has been set to the breaking of bodies, nevertheless the several bodies which go to things must survive from eternity up to the present

time, not yet assailed by any danger.

But since they are possessed of a frail nature, it is not consistent with this that they could have continued through eternity harassed through ages by countless blows.

Again too since a limit of growing and sustaining life has been assigned to things each after its kind, and since by the laws of nature it stands decreed what they can each do and what they cannot do, and since nothing is changed, but all things are so constant that the different birds all in succession exhibit in their body the distinctive marks of their kind, they must sure enough have a body of unchangeable matter also.

For if the first-beginnings of things could in any way be vanquished and changed, it would then be uncertain too what could and what could not rise into being, in short on what principle each thing has its powers defined, its deep-set boundary mark; nor could the generations reproduce so often each after its kind the nature habits, way of life and motions of the parents.

Then again since there is ever a bounding point [to bodies, which appears to us to be a least, there ought in the same way to be a bounding point the least conceivable to that first body] which already is beyond what our senses can perceive: that point sure enough is without parts and consists of a least nature and never has existed apart by itself and will not be able in future so to exist, since it is in itself a part of that other; [602] and so a first and single part and then other and other similar parts in succession fill up in close serried mass the nature of the first body; and since these cannot exist by themselves, they must cleave to that from which they cannot in any way be torn.

First-beginnings therefore are of solid singleness, massed together and cohering closely by means of least parts, not compounded out of a union of those parts, but, rather, strong in everlasting singleness.

From them nature allows nothing to be torn, nothing further to be worn away, reserving them as seeds for things.

Again unless there shall be a least, the very smallest bodies will consist of infinite parts, inasmuch as the half of the half will always have a half and nothing will set bounds to the division.

Therefore between the sum of things and the least of things what difference will there be? There will be no distinction at all; for how absolutely infinite soever the whole sum is, yet the things which are smallest will equally consist of infinite parts.

Now since on this head true reason protests and denies that the mind can believe it, you must yield and admit that there exist such things as are possessed of no parts and are of a least nature.

And since these exist, those first bodies also you must admit to be solid and everlasting.

Once more, if nature, creatress of things, had been wont to compel all things to be broken up into least parts, then too she would be unable to reproduce anything out of those parts, because those things which are

enriched with no parts cannot have the properties which begetting matter ought to have, I mean the various entanglements, weights, blows, clashing, motions, by means of which things severally go on.

For which reasons they who have held fire to be the matter of things and the sum to be formed out of fire alone, are seen to have strayed most widely from true reason.

At the head of whom enters Heraclitus to do battle, famous for obscurity more among the frivolous than the earnest Greeks who seek the truth.

For fools admire and like all things the more which they perceive to be concealed under involved language, and determine things to be true which can prettily tickle the ears and are varnished over with finely sounding phrase.

For I want to know how things can be so various, if they are formed out of fire one and unmixed: [647] it would avail nothing for hot fire to be condensed or rarefied, if the same nature which the whole fire has belonged to the parts of fire as well.

The heat would be more intense by compression of parts, more faint by their severance and dispersion.

More than this you cannot think it in the power of such causes to effect, far less could so great a diversity of things come from mere density and rarity of fires.

Observe also, if they suppose void to be mixed up in things, fire may then be condensed and left rare; but because they see many things rise up in contradiction to them and shrink from leaving unmixed void in things, fearing the steep, they lose the true road, and do not perceive on the other hand that if void is taken from things, all things are condensed and, out of all things is formed one single body, which cannot briskly radiate anything from it, in the way heat-giving fire emits light and warmth, letting you see that it is not of closely compressed parts.

But if they haply think that in some other way fires maybe quenched in the union and change their body, you are to know that if they shall scruple on no side to do this, all heat sure enough will be utterly brought to nothing, and all things that are produced will be formed out of nothing.

For whenever a thing changes and quits its proper limits, at once this change of state is the death of that which was before.

Therefore something or other must needs be left to those fires of theirs undestroyed, that you may not have all things absolutely returning to nothing, and the whole store of things born anew and flourishing out of nothing.

Since then in fact there are some most unquestionable bodies which always preserve the same nature, on whose going or coming and change of order things change their nature and bodies are transformed, you are to know that these first bodies of things are not of fire.

For it would matter nothing that some should withdraw and go away and others should be added on and some should have their order changed, if one and all they yet retained the nature of heat; for whatever they produced would

be altogether fire.

But thus methinks it is: there are certain bodies whose clashings, motions, order, position, and shapes produce fires, and which by a change of, order change the nature of the things and do not resemble fire nor anything else which has the power of sending bodies to our senses and touching by its contact our sense of touch.

Again to say that all things are fire and that no real thing except fire exists in the number of things, as this same man does, appears to be sheer dotage.

[691] For he himself takes his stand on the side of the senses to fight against the senses and shakes their authority, on which rests all our belief, ay from which this fire as he calls it is known to himself; for he believes that the senses can truly perceive fire, he does not believe they can perceive all other things which are not a whit less clear.

Now this appears to me to be as false as it is foolish; for to what shall we appeal? What surer test can we have than the senses, whereby to note truth and falsehood? Again why should any one rather abolish all things and choose to leave the single nature of heat, than deny that fires exist, while he allows any thing else to be? It seems to be equal madness to affirm either this or that.

For these reasons they who have held that fire is the matter of things and that the sum can be formed out of fire, and they who have determined air to be the first-beginning in begetting things, and all who have held that water by itself alone forms things, or that earth produces all things and changes into all the different natures of things, appear to have strayed exceedingly wide of the truth; as well as they who make the first-beginnings of things twofold coupling air with fire and earth with water, and they who believe that all things grow out of four things, fire earth and air and water.

Chief of whom is Agrigentine Empedocles: him within the three-cornered shores of its lands that island bore, about which the Ionian sea flows in large crankings, and splashes up brine from its green waves.

Here the sea racing in its straitened froth divides by its waters the shores of Italia's lands from the other's coasts; here is wasteful Charybdis and here the rumblings of Aetna threaten anew to gather up such fury of flames, as again with force to belch forth the fires bursting from its throat and carry up to heaven once more the lightnings of flame.

Now though this great country is seen to deserve in many ways the wonder of mankind and is held to be well worth visiting, rich in all good things, guarded by large force of men, yet seems it to have held within it nothing more glorious than this man, nothing more holy marvelous and dear.

The verses too of his godlike genius cry with a loud voice and set forth in such wise his glorious discoveries that he hardly seems born of a mortal stock.

[734] Yet he and those whom we have mentioned above immeasurably inferior and far beneath him, although the authors of many excellent and godlike discoveries, they have given responses from so to say their hearts' holy of holies with more sanctity and on much more grounds than the Pythia

who speaks out from the tripod and laurel of Phoebus, have yet gone to ruin in the first-beginnings of things: it is there they have fallen, and, great themselves, great and heavy has been that fall; first because they have banished void from things and yet assign to them motions, and allow things soft and rare, air sun fire earth, living things and corn, and yet mix not up void in their body; next because they suppose that there is no limit to the division of bodies and no stop set to their breaking and that there exists no least at all in things; though we see that that is the bounding point of any thing which seems to be least to our senses, so that from this you may infer that because the things which you do not see have a bounding point, there is a least in them.

Moreover since they assign soft first-beginnings of things, which we see to have birth and to be of a body altogether mortal, the sum of things must in that case revert to nothing and the store of things be born anew and flourish out of nothing: how wide now of the truth both these doctrines are you will already comprehend.

In the next place these bodies are in many ways mutually hostile and poisonous; and therefore they will either perish when they have met, or will fly asunder just as we see, when a storm has gathered, lightnings and rains and winds fly asunder.

Again if all things are produced from four things and all again broken up into those things, how can they be called first-beginnings of things any more than things be called their first-beginnings, the supposition being reversed? For they are begotten time about and interchange color and their whole nature without ceasing.

But if haply you suppose that the body of fire and of earth and air and the moisture of water meet in such a way that none of them in the union changes its nature, no thing I tell you can be then produced out of them, neither living thing nor thing with inanimate body, as a tree; in fact each thing amid the medley of this discordant mass will display its own nature and air will be seen to be mixed up with earth and heat to remain in union with moisture.

But first-beginnings ought in begetting things to bring with them a latent and unseen nature in order that no thing stand out, to be in the way and prevent whatever is produced from having its own proper being.

[780] Moreover they go back to heaven and its fires for a beginning, and first suppose that fire changes into air, next that from air water is begotten and earth is produced out of water, and that all in reverse order come back from earth, water first, next air, then heat, and that these cease not to interchange, to pass from heaven to earth, from earth to the stars of ether.

All which first-beginnings must on no account do; since something unchangeable must needs remain over, that things may not utterly be brought back to nothing.

For whenever a thing changes and quits its proper limits, at once this change of state is the death of that which was before.

Wherefore since those things which we have mentioned a little before pass into a state of change, they must be formed out of others which cannot in any case be transformed, that you may not have things returning altogether to nothing.

Why not rather hold that there are certain bodies possessed of such a nature, that, if they have haply produced fire, the same may, after a few have been taken away and a few added on and the order and motion changed, produce air; and that all other things may in the same way interchange with one another? "But plain matter of fact clearly proves" you say "that all things grow up into the air and are fed out of the earth; and unless the season at the propitious period send such abundant showers that the trees reel beneath the soaking storms of rain, and unless the sun on its part foster them and supply heat, corn, trees and living things could not grow."

Quite true, and unless solid food and soft water should recruit us, our substance would waste away and life break wholly up out of all the sinews and bones; for we beyond doubt are recruited and fed by certain things, this and that other thing by certain other things.

Because many first-beginnings common to many things in many ways are mixed up in things, therefore sure enough different things are fed by different things.

And it often makes a great difference with what things and in what position the same first beginnings are held in union and what motions they mutually impart and receive; for the same make up heaven sea lands rivers sun, the same make up corn trees and living things; but they are mixed up with different things and in different ways as they move.

[823] Nay you see throughout even in these verses of ours many elements common to many words, though you must needs admit that the lines and words differ one from the other both in meaning and in sound wherewith they sound.

So much can elements effect by a mere change of order; but those elements which are the first-beginnings of things can bring with them more combinations out of which different things can severally be produced.

Let us now also examine the homoeomeria of Anaxagoras as the Greeks term it, which the poverty of our native speech does not allow us to name in our own tongue; though it is easy enough to set forth in words the thing itself.

First of all then, when he speaks of the homoeomeria of things, you must know he supposes bones to be formed out of very small and minute bones and flesh of very small and minute flesh and blood by the coming together of many drops of blood, and gold he thinks can be composed of grains of gold and earth be a concretion of small earths, and fires can come from fires and water from waters, and everything else he fancies and supposes to be produced on a like principle.

And yet at the same time he does not allow that void exists anywhere in things, or that there is a limit to the division of things.

Wherefore he appears to me on both these grounds to be as much mistaken as those whom we have already spoken of above.

Moreover, the first-beginnings which he supposes are too frail; if first-beginnings they be which are possessed of a nature like to the things themselves and are just as liable to suffering and death, and which nothing reins back from destruction.

For which of them will hold out, so as to escape death, beneath so strong a pressure within the very jaws of destruction? Fire or water or air? Which of these? Blood or bones?

Not one methinks, where everything will be just as essentially mortal as those things which we see with the senses' perish before our eyes vanquished by some force.

But I appeal to facts demonstrated above for proof that things cannot fall away to nothing nor on the other hand grow from nothing.

Again since food gives increase and nourishment to the body, you are to know that our veins and blood and bones [and the like are formed of things foreign to them in kind]; or if they shall say that all foods are of a mixed body and contain in them small bodies of sinews and bones and veins as well and particles of blood, it will follow that all food, solid as well as liquid, must be held to be composed of things foreign to them in kind, of bones that is and sinews and matter and blood mixed up.

[865] Again if all the bodies which grow out of the earth, are in the earths, the earth must be composed of things foreign to it in kind which grow out of these earths.

Apply again this reasoning to other things, and you may use just the same words.

If flame and smoke and ash are latent in woods, woods must necessarily be composed of things foreign to them in kind.

Again all those bodies, to which the earth gives food, it increases [out of things foreign to them in kind which rise out of the earth: thus too the bodies of flame which issue from the woods, are fed] out of things foreign to them in kind which rise out of these woods.

Here some slight opening is left for evasion, which Anaxagoras avails himself of, choosing to suppose that all things though latent are mixed up in things, and that is alone visible of which there are the largest number of bodies in the mixture and these more ready to hand and stationed in the first rank.

This however is far banished from true reason.

For then it were natural that corn too should often, when crushed by the formidable force of the stone, show some mark of blood or some other of the things which have their nourishment in our body.

For like reasons it were fitting that from grasses too, when we rub them between two stones, blood should ooze out; that waters should yield sweet drops, in flavor like to the udder of milk in sheep; yes and that often, when

clouds of earth have been crumbled, kinds of grasses and corn and leaves should be found to lurk distributed among the earth in minute quantities; and lastly that ash and smoke and minute fires should be found latent in woods, when they were broken off.

Now since plain matter of fact teaches that none of these results follows, you are to know that things are not so mixed up in things; but rather seeds common to many things must in many ways be mixed up and latent in things.

“But it often comes to pass on high mountains” you say “that contiguous tops of tall trees rub together, the strong south winds constraining them so to do, until the flower of flame has broken out and they have burst into a blaze.”

Quite true, and yet fire is not innate in woods; but there are many seeds of heat, and when they by rubbing have streamed together, they produce conflagrations in the forests.

[904] But if the flame was stored up ready made in the forests, the fire could not be concealed for any length of time, but would destroy forests, burn up trees indiscriminately.

Do you now see, as we said a little before, that it often makes a very great difference with what things and in what position the same first beginnings are held in union and what motions they mutually impart and receive, and that the same may, when a little changed in arrangement produce say fires and a fir?

Just as the words too consist of elements only a little changed in arrangement, though we denote firs and fires with two quite distinct names.

Once again, if you suppose that whatever you perceive among visible things cannot be produced without imagining bodies of matter possessed of a like nature, in this way you will find the first-beginnings of things are destroyed: it will come to this that they will be shaken by loud fits of convulsive laughter and will bedew with salt tears face and cheeks.

Now mark and learn what remains to be known and hear it more distinctly.

Nor does my mind fail to perceive how dark the things are; but the great hope of praise has smitten my heart with sharp thyrus, and at the same time has struck into my breast sweet love of the muses, with which now inspired I traverse in blooming thought the pathless haunts of the Pierides never yet trodden by sole of man.

I love to approach the untasted springs and to quaff, I love to cull fresh flowers and gather for my head a distinguished crown from spots whence the muses have yet veiled the brows of none; first because I teach of great things and essay to release the mind from the fast bonds of religious scruples, and next because on a dark subject I pen such lucid verses overlaying all with the muses' charm.

For that too would seem to be not without good grounds: just as physicians when they purpose to give nauseous wormwood to children, first smear the rim round the bowl with the sweet yellow juice of honey, that the unthinking age of children may be fooled as far as the lips, and meanwhile drink up the bitter draught of wormwood and though beguiled yet not be betrayed, but

rather by such means recover health and strength; so I now, since this doctrine seems generally somewhat bitter to those by whom it has not been handled, and the multitude shrinks back from it in dismay, have resolved to set forth to you our doctrine in sweet-toned Pierian verse and overlay it as it were with the pleasant honey of the muses, if haply by such means I might engage your mind on my verses, till you clearly perceive the whole nature of things, its shape and frame.

[948] But since I have taught that most solid bodies of matter fly about for ever unvanquished through all time, mark now, let us unfold whether there is or is not any limit to their sum; likewise let us clearly see whether that which has been found to be void, or room and space, in which things severally go on, is all of it altogether finite or stretches without limits and to an unfathomable depth.

Well then, the existing universe is bounded in none of its dimensions; for then it must have had an outside.

Again it is seen that there can be an outside of nothing, unless there be something beyond to bound it, so that that is seen, farther than which the nature of this our sense does not follow the thing.

Now since we must admit that there is nothing outside the sum, it has no outside, and therefore is without end and limit.

And it matters not in which of its regions you take your stand; so invariably, whatever position any one has taken up, he leaves the universe just as infinite as before in all directions.

Again if for the moment all existing space be held to be bounded, supposing a man runs forward to its outside borders, and stands on the utmost verge and then throws a winged javelin, do you choose that when hurled with vigorous force it shall advance to the point to which it has been sent and fly to a distance, or do you decide that something can get in its way and stop it?

For you must admit and adopt one of the two suppositions; either of which shuts you out from all escape and compels you to grant that the universe stretches without end.

For whether there is something to get in its way and prevent its coming whither it was sent and placing itself in the point intended, or whether it is carried forward, in either case it has not started from the end.

In this way I will go on and, wherever you have placed the outside borders, I will ask what then becomes of the javelin.

The result will be that an end can nowhere be fixed, and that the room given for flight will still prolong the power of flight.

Lastly one thing is seen by the eyes to end another thing; air bounds off hills, and mountains air, earth limits sea and sea again all lands; the universe however there is nothing outside to end.

[989] Again if all the space of the whole sum were enclosed within fixed borders and were bounded, in that case the store of matter by its solid weights would have streamed together from all sides to the lowest point nor could

anything have gone on under the canopy of heaven, no nor would there have been a heaven nor sunlight at all, inasmuch as all matter, settling down through infinite time past, would lie together in a heap.

But as it is, sure enough no rest is given to the bodies of the first-beginnings, because there is no lowest point at all, to which they might stream together as it were, and where they might take up their positions.

All things are ever going on in ceaseless motion on all sides and bodies of matter stirred to action are supplied from beneath out of infinite space.

Therefore the nature of room and the space of the unfathomable void are such as bright thunderbolts cannot race through in their course though gliding on through endless tract of time, no nor lessen one jot the journey that remains to go by all their travel: so huge a room is spread out on all sides for things without any bounds in all directions round.

Again nature keeps the sum of things from setting any limit to itself, since she compels body to be ended by void and void in turn by body, so that either she thus renders the universe infinite by this alternation of the two, or else the one of the two, in case the other does not bound it, with its single nature stretches nevertheless immeasurably.

[But void I have already proved to be infinite; therefor matter must be infinite: for if void were infinite, and matter finite] neither sea nor earth nor the glittering quarters of heaven nor mortal kind nor the holy bodies of the gods could hold their ground one brief passing hour; since forced asunder from its union the store of matter would be dissolved and borne along the mighty void, or rather I should say would never have combined to produce any thing, since scattered abroad it could never have been brought together.

For verily not by design did the first beginnings of things station themselves each in its right place guided by keen intelligence, nor did they bargain sooth to say what motions each should assume, but because many in number and shifting about in many ways throughout the universe they are driven and tormented by blows during infinite time past, after trying motions and unions of every kind at length they fall into arrangements such as those out of which this our sum of things has been formed, and by which too, it is preserved through many great years when once it has been thrown into the appropriate motions, and causes the streams to replenish the greedy sea with copious river waters and the earth, fostered by the heat of the sun, to renew its produce, and the race of living things to come up and flourish, and the gliding fires of ether to live: [1033] all which these several things could in nowise bring to pass, unless a store of matter could rise up from infinite space, out of which store they are wont to make up in due season whatever has been lost.

For as the nature of living things when robbed of food loses its substance and wastes away, thus all things must be broken up, as soon as matter has ceased to be supplied, diverted in any way from its proper course.

Nor can blows from without hold together all the sum which has been brought into union.

They can it is true frequently strike upon and stay a part, until others come and the sum can be completed.

At times however they are compelled to rebound and in so doing grant to the first beginnings of things room and time for flight, to enable them to get clear away from the mass in union.

Wherefore again and again I repeat many bodies must rise up; nay for the blows themselves not to fail, there is need of an infinite supply of matter on all sides.

And herein, Memmius, be far from believing this, that all things as they say press to the center of the sum, and that for this reason the nature of the world stands fast without any strokes from the outside and the uppermost and lowest parts cannot part asunder in any direction, because all things have been always pressing towards the center (if you can believe that anything can rest upon itself); or that the heavy bodies which are beneath the earth all press upwards and are at rest on the earth, turned topsy-turvy, just like the images of things we see before us in the waters.

In the same way they maintain that living things walk head downwards and cannot tumble out of earth into the parts of heaven lying below them any more than our bodies can spontaneously fly into the quarters of heaven; that when those see the sun, we behold the stars of night; and that they share with us time about the seasons of heaven and pass nights equal in length to our days.

But groundless [error has devised such dreams] for fools, because they have embraced [false principles of reason.]

[1069] For there can be no center [where the universe is] infinite; no nor, even if there were a center, could anything take up a position there [any more on that account] than for some quite different reason [be driven away.]

For all room and space, which we term void, must through center, through no-center alike give place to heavy bodies, in whatever directions their motions tend.

Nor is there any spot of such a sort that when bodies have reached it, they can lose their force of gravity and stand upon void; and that again which is void must not serve to support anything, but must, as its nature craves, continually give place.

Things cannot therefore in such a way be held in union, o'er-mastered by love of a center.

Again since they do not suppose that all bodies press to the center, but only those of earth, and those, of water, [both such as descend to the earth in rain] and those which are held in by the earth's body, so to say, the fluid of the sea and great waters from the mountains; while on the other hand they teach that the subtle element of air and hot fires at the same time are carried away from the center and that for this reason the whole ether round bickers with signs and the sun's flame is fed throughout the blue of heaven, because heat flying from the center all gathers together there, and that the topmost boughs of trees could not put forth leaves at all, unless from time to time [nature supplied]

food from the earth to each [throughout both stem and boughs, their reasons are not only false, but they contradict each other.

Space I have already proved to be infinite; and space being infinite matter as I have said must also be infinite] lest after the winged fashion of flames the walls of the world should suddenly break up and fly abroad along the mighty void, and all other things follow for like reasons and the innermost quarters of heaven tumble in from above and the earth in an instant withdraw from beneath our feet and amid the commingled ruins of things in it and of heaven, ruins unloosing the first bodies, should wholly pass away along the unfathomable void, so that in a moment of time not a wrack should be left behind, nothing save untenanted space and viewless first-beginnings.

For on whatever side you shall first determine first bodies to be wanting, this side will be the gate of death for things, through this the whole crowd of matter will fling itself abroad.

[1113] If you will thoroughly con these things, then carried to the end with slight trouble [you will be able by yourself to understand all the rest.]

For one thing after another will grow clear and dark night will not rob you of the road and keep you from surveying the utmost ends of nature: in such wise things will light the torch for other things.

BOOK II.

[1] It is sweet, when on the great sea the winds trouble its waters, to behold from land another's deep distress; not that it is a pleasure and delight that any should be afflicted, but because it is sweet to see from what evils you are yourself exempt.

It is sweet also to look upon the mighty struggles of war arrayed along the plains without sharing yourself in the danger.

But nothing is more welcome than to hold the lofty and serene positions well fortified by the learning of the wise, from which you may look down upon others and see them wandering all abroad and going astray in their search for the path of life, see the contest among them of intellect, the rivalry of birth, the striving night and day with surpassing effort to struggle up to the summit of power and be masters of the world.

O miserable minds of men! O blinded breasts! In what darkness of life and in how great dangers is passed this term of life whatever its duration! Not choose to see that nature craves for herself no more than this, that pain hold aloof from the body, and she in mind enjoy a feeling of pleasure exempt from care and fear? Therefore we see that for the body's nature few things are needed at all, such and such only as take away pain.

Nay, though more gratefully at times they can minister to us many choice delights, nature for her part wants them not, when there are no golden images of youths through the house holding in their right hands flaming lamps for supply of light to the nightly banquet, when the house shines not with silver nor glitters with gold nor do the panelled and gilded roofs re-echo to the harp, what time, though these things be wanting, they spread themselves in groups on the soft grass beside a stream of water under the boughs of a high tree and at no great cost pleasantly refresh their bodies, above all when the weather smiles and the seasons of the year besprinkle the green grass with flowers.

[34] Nor do hot fevers sooner quit the body if you toss about on pictured tapestry and blushing purple than if you must lie under a poor man's blanket.

Wherefore since treasures avail nothing in respect of our body nor birth nor the glory of kingly power, advancing farther you must hold that they are of no service to the mind as well; unless may be when you see your legions swarm over the ground of the campus waging the mimicry of war, strengthened flank and rear by powerful reserves and great force of cavalry, and you marshal them equipped in arms and animated with one spirit, thereupon you find that religious scruples scared by these things fly panic-stricken from the mind; and that then fears of death leave the breast unembarrassed and free from care, when you see your fleet swarm forth and spread itself far and wide.

But if we see that these things are food for laughter and mere mockeries, and in good truth the fears of men and dogging cares dread not the clash of arms and cruel weapons, if unabashed they mix among kings and caesars and

stand not in awe of the glitter from gold nor the brilliant sheen of the purple robe, how can you doubt that this is wholly the prerogative of reason, when the whole of life withal is a struggle in the dark?

For even as children are flurried and dread all things in the thick darkness, thus we in the daylight fear at times things not a whit more to be dreaded than those which children shudder at in the dark and fancy sure to be.

This terror therefore and darkness of mind must be dispelled not by the rays of the sun and glittering shafts of day, but by the aspect and law of nature.

Now mark and I will explain by what motion the begetting bodies of matter do beget different things and after they are begotten again break them up, and by what force they are compelled so to do and what velocity is given to them for travelling through the great void: do you mind to give heed to my words.

For verily matter does not cohere inseparably massed together, since we see that everything wanes and perceive that all things ebb as it were by length of time and that age withdraws them from our sight, though yet the sum is seen to remain unimpaired by reason that the bodies which quit each thing, lessen the things from which they go, gift with increase those to which they have come, compel the former to grow old, the latter to come to their prime, and yet abide not with these.

[75] Thus the sum of things is ever renewed and mortals live by a reciprocal dependency.

Some nations wax, others wane, and in a brief space the races of living things are changed and like runners hand over the lamp of life.

If you think that first-beginnings of things can lag and by lagging give birth to new motions of things, you wander far astray from the path of true reason: since they travel about through void, the first beginnings of things must all move on either by their weight or haply by stroke of another.

For when during motion they have, as often happens, met and clashed, the result is a sudden rebounding in an opposite direction; and no wonder, since they are most hard and of weight proportioned to their solidity and nothing behind gets in their way.

And that you may more clearly see that all bodies of matter are in restless movement, remember that there is no lowest point in the sum of the universe, and that first bodies have not where to take their stand, since space is without end and limit and extends immeasurably in all directions round, as I have shown in many words and as has been proved by sure reason.

Since this then is a certain truth, sure enough no rest is given to first bodies throughout the unfathomable void, but driven on rather in ceaseless and varied motion they partly, after they have pressed together, rebound leaving great spaces between, while in part they are so dashed away after: the stroke as to leave but small spaces between.

And all that form a denser aggregation when brought together and rebound leaving trifling spaces between, held fast by their own close-tangled shapes,

these form enduring bases of stone and unyielding bodies of iron and the rest of their class; few in number, which travel onward along the great void.

All the others spring far off and rebound far leaving great spaces between: these furnish us with thin air and bright sunlight.

And many more travel along the great void, which have been thrown off from the unions of things or though admitted have yet in no case been able likewise to assimilate their motions.

Of this truth, which I am telling, we have a representation and picture always going on before our eyes and present to us: observe whenever the rays are let in and pour the sunlight through the dark chambers of houses: [116] you will see many minute bodies in many ways through the apparent void mingle in the midst of the light of the rays, and as in never-ending conflict skirmish and give battle combating in troops and never halting, driven about in frequent meetings and partings; so that you may guess from this, what it is for first-beginnings of things to be ever tossing about in the great void.

So far as it goes, a small thing may give an illustration of great things and put you on the track of knowledge.

And for this reason too it is meet that you should give greater heed to these bodies which are seen to tumble about in the sun's rays, because such tumblings imply that motions also of matter latent and unseen are at the bottom.

For you will observe many things there impelled by unseen blows to change their course and driven back return the way they came now this way, now that way in all directions round.

All, you are to know, derive this restlessness from the first-beginnings.

For the first-beginnings of things move first of themselves; (next those bodies which form a small aggregate and come nearest, so to say to the powers of the first beginnings, are impelled and set in movement by the unseen strokes of those first bodies, and they next in turn stir up bodies which are a little larger.

Thus motion mounts up from the first-beginnings and step by step issues forth to our senses, so that those bodies also move, which we can discern in the sunlight, though it is not clearly seen by what blows they so act.

Now what velocity is given to bodies of matter, you may apprehend, Memmius in few words from this: when morning first sprinkles the earth with fresh light and the different birds flitting about the pathless woods through the buxom air fill all places with their clear notes, we see it to be plain and evident to all how suddenly the sun after rising is wont at such a time to overspread all things and clothe them with his light.

But that heat which the sun emits and that bright light pass not through empty void; and therefore they are forced to travel more slowly, until they cleave through the waves so to speak, of air.

Nor do the several minute bodies of heat pass on one by one, but closely entangled and massed together; whereby at one and the same time they are

pulled back by one another and are impeded from without; so that they are forced to travel more slowly.

But the first-beginnings which are of solid singleness, when they pass through empty void and nothing delays them from without and they themselves, single from the nature of their parts, are borne with headlong endeavor towards the one single spot to which their efforts tend, must sure enough surpass in velocity and be carried along much more swiftly than the light of the sun, and race through many times the extent of space in the same time in which the beams of the sun fill the heaven throughout. [nor follow up the several first-beginnings to see by what law each thing goes on.]

[165] But some in opposition to this, ignorant of matter, believe that nature cannot without the providence of the gods, in such nice conformity to the ways of men, vary the seasons of the year and bring forth crops, ay and all the other things, which divine pleasure, the guide of life, prompts men to approach, escorting them in person and enticing them by her fondlings to continue their races through the arts of Venus, that mankind may not come to an end.

Now when they suppose that the gods designed all things for the sake of men, they seem to me in all respects to have strayed most widely from true reason.

For even if I did not know what first-beginnings are, yet this, judging by the very arrangements of heaven, I would venture to maintain, that the nature of the world has by no means been made for us by divine power: so great are the defects with which it stands encumbered.

All which, Memmius, we will hereafter make clear to you: we will now go on to explain what remains to be told of motions.

Now methinks is the place herein to prove this point also, that no bodily thing can by its own power be borne upwards and travel upwards; that the bodies of flames may not in this manner lead you into error.

For they are begotten with an upward tendency, and in the same direction receive increase, and goodly crops and trees grow upwards, though their weights, so far as in them is, all tend downwards.

And when fires leap to the roofs of houses and with swift flame lick up rafters and beams, we are not to suppose that they do so spontaneously without a force pushing them up.

Even thus blood discharged from our body spurts out and springs upon high and scatters gore about.

See you not too with what force the liquid of water spits out logs and beams?

The more deeply we have pushed them sheer down and have pressed them in, many of us together, with all our might and much painful effort, with the greater avidity it vomits them up and casts them forth, so that they rise and start out more than half their length.

[199] And yet methinks we doubt not that these, so far as in them is, are all

borne downwards through the empty void.

In the same way flames also ought to be able, when squeezed out, to mount upward through the air, although their weights, so far as in them is, strive to draw them down.

See you not too that the nightly meteors of heaven as they fly aloft draw after them long trails of flames in whatever direction nature has given them a passage?

Do you not perceive stars and constellations fall to the earth?

The sun also from the height of heaven sheds its heat on all sides and sows the fields with light; to the earth, therefore, as well, the sun's heat tends.

Lightnings also you see fly athwart the rains: now from this side now from that, fires burst from the clouds and rush about; the force of flame falls to the earth all round.

This point too, herein we wish you to apprehend: when bodies are borne downwards sheer through void by their own weights, at quite uncertain times and uncertain spots they push themselves a little from their course: you just and only just can call it a change of inclination.

If they were not used to swerve, they would all fall down, like drops of rain, through the deep void, and no clashing would have been begotten nor blow produced among the first beginnings: thus nature never would have produced aught.

But if haply any one believes that heavier bodies, as they are carried more quickly sheer through space, can fall from above on the lighter and so beget blows able to produce begetting motions, he goes most widely astray from true reason.

For whenever bodies fall through water and thin air, they must quicken their descents in proportion to their weights, because the body of water and subtle nature of air cannot retard everything in equal degree, but more readily give way, overpowered by the heavier: on the other hand empty void cannot offer resistance to anything in any direction at any time, but must, as its nature craves, continually give way; and for this reason all things must be moved and borne along with equal velocity though of unequal weights through the unresisting void.

Therefore heavier things will never be able to fall from above on lighter nor of themselves to beget blows sufficient to produce the varied motions by which nature carries on things.

[243] Wherefore again and again I say bodies must swerve a little; and an yet not more than the least possible; lest we be found to be imagining oblique motions and this the reality should refute.

For this we see to be plain and evident, that weights, so far as in them is, cannot travel obliquely, when they fall from above, at least so far as you can perceive; but that nothing swerves in any case from the straight course, who is there that can perceive? Again if all motion is ever linked together and a new motion ever springs from another in a fixed order and first-beginnings do not

by swerving make some commencement of motion to break through the decrees of fate, that cause follow not cause from everlasting, whence have all living creatures here on earth, whence, I ask, has been wrested from the fates the power by which we go forward whither the will leads each, by which likewise we change the direction of our motions neither at a fixed time nor fixed place, but when and where the mind itself has prompted?

For beyond a doubt, in these things his own will makes for each a beginning and from this beginning motions are welled through the limbs.

See you not too, when the barriers are thrown open at a given moment, that yet the eager powers of the horses cannot start forward so instantaneously as the mind itself desires?

The whole store of matter through the whole body must be sought out, in order that stirred up through all the frame it may follow with undivided effort the bent of the mind; so that you see the beginning of motion is born from the heart, and the action first commences in the will of the mind and next is transmitted through the whole body and frame.

Quite different is the case when we move on propelled by a stroke inflicted by the strong might and strong compulsion of another; for then it is quite clear that all the matter of the whole body moves and is hurried on against our inclination, until the will has reined it in throughout the limbs.

Do you see then in this case that, though an outward force often pushes men on and compels them frequently to advance against their will and to be hurried headlong on, there yet is something in our breast sufficient to struggle against and resist it? And when ,too, this something chooses, the store of matter is compelled sometimes to change its course through the limbs and frame, and after it has been forced forward, is reined in and settles back into its place.

[284] Wherefore in seeds too you must admit the same, admit that besides blows and weights there is a cause of motions, from which this power of free action has been begotten in us, since we see that nothing can come from nothing.

For weight forbids that all things be done by blows through as it were an outward force; but that the mind itself does not feel an internal necessity in all its actions and is not as it were overmastered and compelled to bear and put up with this, is caused by a minute swerving of first beginnings at no fixed part of space and no fixed time.

Nor was the store of matter ever more closely massed nor held apart by larger spaces between; for nothing is either added to its bulk or lost to it.

Wherefore the bodies of the first-beginnings in time gone by moved in the same way in which now they move, and will ever hereafter be borne along in like manner, and the things which have been wont to be begotten will be begotten after the same law and will be and will grow and will wax in strength so far as is given to each by the decrees of nature.

And no force can change the sum of things; for there is nothing outside,

either into which any kind of matter can escape out of the universe or out of which a new supply can arise and burst into the universe and change all the nature of things and alter their motions.

And herein you need not wonder at this, that though the first-beginnings of things are all in motion, yet the sum is seen to rest in supreme repose, unless where a thing exhibits motions with its individual body.

For all the nature of first things lies far away from our senses beneath their ken; and therefore since they are themselves beyond what you can see, they must withdraw from sight their motion as well; and the more so that the things which we can see, do yet often conceal their motions when a great distance off.

Thus often the woolly flocks as they crop the glad pastures on a hill, creep on whither the grass jeweled with fresh dew summons and invites each, and the lambs fed to the full gambol and playfully butt; all which objects appear to us from a distance to be blended together and to rest like a white spot on a green hill.

Again when mighty legions fill with their movements all parts of the plains waging the mimicry of war, the glitter then lifts itself up to the sky, and the whole earth round gleams with brass and beneath a noise is raised by the mighty trampling of men and the mountains stricken by the shouting re-echo the voices to the stars of heaven, and horsemen fly about and suddenly wheeling scour across the middle of the plains, shaking them with the vehemence of their charge.

[330] And yet there is some spot on the high hills, seen from which they appear to stand still and to rest on the plains as a bright spot.

Now mark and next in order apprehend of what kind and how widely differing in their forms are the beginnings of all things, how varied by manifold diversities of shape; not that a scanty number are possessed of a like form, but because as a rule they do not all resemble one the other.

And no wonder; for since there is so great a store of them that, as I have shown, there is no end or sum, they must sure enough not one and all be marked by an equal bulk and like shape, one with another.

Let the race of man pass before you in review, and the mute swimming shoals of the scaly tribes and the blithe herds and wild beasts and the different birds which haunt the gladdening watering spots about river-banks and springs and pools, and those which flit about and throng the pathless woods: then go and take any, one you like in any one kind, and you will yet find that they differ in their shapes, every one from every other.

And in no other way could child recognize mother or mother child; and this we see that they all can do, and that they are just as well known to one another as human beings are.

Thus often in front of the beauteous shrines of the gods a calf falls sacrificed beside the incense-burning altars, and spurts from its breast a warm stream of blood; but the bereaved mother as she ranges over the green lawns

knows the footprints stamped on the ground by the cloven hoofs, scanning with her eyes every spot to see if she can anywhere behold her lost youngling: then she fills with her moanings the leafy wood each time she desists from her search and again and again goes back to the stall pierced to the heart by the loss of her calf; nor can the soft willows and grass quickened with dew and yon rivers gliding level with their banks comfort her mind and put away the care that has entered into her, nor can other forms of calves throughout the glad pastures divert her mind and ease it of its care: so persistently she seeks something special and known.

Again the tender kids with their shaking voices know their horned dams and the butting lambs the flocks of bleating sheep; [368] thus they run, as nature craves, each without fail to its own udder of milk.

Lastly in the case of any kind of corn you like you will yet find that any one grain is not so similar to any other in the same kind, but that there runs through them some difference to distinguish the forms.

On a like principle of difference we see the class of shells paint the lap of earth, when the sea with gentle waves beats on the thirsty sand of the winding shore.

Therefore again and again I say it is necessary for like reasons that first-beginnings of things, since they exist by nature and are not made by hand after the exact model of one, should fly about with shapes in some cases differing one from the other.

It is right easy for us on such a principle to explain why the fire of lightning has much more power to pierce than ours which is born of earthly pinewood: you may say that the heavenly fire of lightning subtle as it is, is formed of smaller shapes and therefore passes through openings which this our fire cannot pass, born, as it is of woods and sprung from pine.

Again light passes through horn, but rain is thrown off. Why?

But that those first bodies of light are smaller than those of which the nurturing liquid of water is made.

And quickly as we see wines flow through a strainer, sluggish oil on the other hand is slow to do so, because sure enough it consists of elements either larger in size or more hooked and tangled in one another, and therefore it is that the first-beginnings of things cannot so readily be separated from each other and severally stream through the several openings of any thing.

Moreover the liquids honey and milk excite a pleasant sensation of tongue when held in the mouth; but on the other hand the nauseous nature of wormwood and of harsh centaury writhes the mouth with a noisome flavor; so that you may easily see that the things which are able to affect the senses pleasantly consist of smooth and round elements; while all those on the other hand which are found to be bitter and harsh, are held in connection by particles that are more hooked and for this reason are wont to tear open passages into our senses and in entering in to break through the body.

All things in short, which are agreeable to the senses and all which are

unpleasant to the feeling are mutually repugnant, formed as they are out of an unlike first shape; [409] lest haply you suppose that the harsh grating of the creaking saw consists of the elements as smooth as those of tuneful melodies which musicians wake into life with nimble fingers and give shape to on strings; or suppose that the first-beginnings are of like shape which pass into the nostrils of men, when noisome carcasses are burning, and when the stage is fresh sprinkled with Cilician saffron, while the altar close by exhales Panchaeian odors; or decide that the pleasant colors of things which are able to feast the eyes are formed of a seedlike to the seed of those which make the pupil smart and force it to shed tears or from their disgusting aspect look hideous and foul.

For every shape which gratifies the senses has been formed not without a smoothness in its elements; but on the other hand whatever is painful and harsh has been produced not without some roughness of matter.

There are too some elements which are with justice thought to be neither smooth nor altogether hooked with barbed points, but rather to have minute angles slightly projecting, so that they can tickle rather than hurt the senses; of which class tartar of wine is formed and the flavors of elecampane.

Again that hot fires and cold frost have fangs of a dissimilar kind wherewith to pierce the senses, is proved to us by the touch of each.

For touch, touch, ye holy divinities of the gods, the body's feeling is, either when an extraneous thing makes its way in, or when a thing which is born in the body hurts it, or gives pleasure as it issues forth by the birth-bestowing ways of Venus, or when from some collision the seeds are disordered within the body and distract the feeling by their mutual disturbance; as if haply you were yourself to strike with the hand any part of the body you please and so make trial.

Wherefore the shapes of the first-beginnings must differ widely, since they are able to give birth to different feelings.

Again things which look to us hard and dense must consist of particles more hooked together, and be held in union because welded all through with branch-like elements.

In this class first of all diamond stones stand in foremost line inured to despise blows, and stout blocks of basalt and the strength of hard iron and brass bolts which scream out as they hold fast to their staples.

Those things which are liquid and of fluid body ought to consist more of smooth and round elements; [452] for the several drops have no mutual cohesion and their onward course too has a ready flow downwards.

All things lastly which you see disperse themselves in an instant, as smoke mists and flames, if they do not consist entirely of smooth and round, must yet not be held fast by closely tangled elements, so that they may be able to pierce the body and enter it with biting power, yet not stick together: thus you may easily know, that whatever we see the senses have been able to allay, consists not of tangled but of pointed elements.

Do not however hold it to be wonderful that some things which are fluid you see to be likewise bitter, for instance the sea's moisture: because it is fluid, it consists of smooth and round particles, and many rough bodies mixed up with these produce pains; and yet they must not be hooked so as to hold together: you are to know that though rough, they are yet spherical, so that while they roll freely on, they may at the same time hurt the senses.

And that you may more readily believe that with smooth are mixed rough first-beginnings from which Neptune's body is made bitter, there is a way of separating these, and of seeing how the fresh water, when it is often filtered through the earth, flows by itself into a trench and sweetens; for it leaves above the first-beginnings of the nauseous saltiness, inasmuch as the rough particles can more readily stay behind in the earth.

And now that I have shown this, I will go on to link to it a truth which depends on this and from this draws its proof: the first-beginnings of things have different shapes, but the number of shapes is finite.

If this were not so, then once more it would follow that some seeds must be of infinite bulk of body.

For in the same seed, in the single small size any first body you like the shapes cannot vary much from one another: say for instance that first bodies consist of three least parts, or augment them by a few more; when to wit in all possible ways, by placing each in turn at the top and at the bottom, by making the right change places with the left, you shall have tried all those parts of one first body and found what manner of shape each different arrangement gives to the whole of that body, if after all this haply you shall wish still to vary the shapes, you will have to add other parts; it will next follow that, for like reasons the arrangement will require other parts, if haply you shall wish still again to vary the shapes.

[494] From all this it results that increase of bulk in the body follows upon newness of the shapes.

Wherefore you cannot possibly believe that seeds have an infinite variety of forms, lest you force some to be of a monstrous hugeness, which as I have above shown cannot be proved.

Moreover I tell you barbaric robes and radiant Meliboean purple dipped in Thessalian dye of shells [and the hues which are displayed] by the golden brood of peacocks steeped in laughing beauty would all be thrown aside surpassed by some new color of things; the smell of myrrh would be despised and the flavors of honey, and the melodies of the swan and Phoebean tunes set off by the varied play of strings would in like sort be suppressed and silenced; for something ever would arise more surpassing than the rest.

All things likewise might fall back into worse states, even as we have said they might advance to better; for reversely too one thing would be more noisome than all other things to nostril, ear, and eye, and taste.

Now since these things are not so, but a fixed limit has been assigned to things which bounds their sum on each side, you must admit that matter also

has a finite number of different shapes.

Once more from summer fires to chill frosts a definite path is traced out and in like manner is again traveled back; for every degree of cold and heat and intermediate warmth lie between those extremes, filling up in succession the sum.

Therefore the things produced differ by finite degrees, since at both ends they are marked off by points, one at one, another at the other end, molested on the one hand by flames, on the other by stiffening frosts.

And now that I have shown this, I will go on to link to it a truth which depends on this and from this draws its proof: the first-beginnings of things which have a like shape one with the other are infinite in number.

For since the difference of forms is finite, those which are like must be infinite or the sum of matter will be finite, which I proved not to be the case, when I showed in my verses that the minute bodies of matter from everlasting continually uphold the sum of things through an uninterrupted succession of blows on all sides.

For though you see that some animals are rarer than others and discern a less fruitful nature in them, yet in another quarter and spot and in distant lands there may be many of that kind and the full tale may be made up; just as we see that in the class of four-footed beasts snake-handed elephants are elsewhere especially numerous; [537] for India is so fenced about with an ivory rampart made out of many thousands of these, that its inner parts cannot be reached, so great is the quantity of brutes, of which we see but very few samples.

But yet though I should grant this point too: be there even as you will some one thing sole in its kind existing alone with a body that had birth, and let no other thing resemble it in the whole world; yet unless there shall be an infinite supply of matter out of which it may be conceived and brought into being, it cannot be produced, and, more than this, it cannot have growth and food.

For though I should assume this point also that birth-giving bodies of some one thing are tossed about in finite quantity throughout the universe, whence, where, by what force and in what way shall they meet together and combine in so vast a sea, such an alien medley of matter? They have methinks no way of uniting; but even as when great and numerous shipwrecks have occurred, the great sea is wont to tumble about banks, rudders, yards, prow, masts and swimming oars, so that poop-fittings are seen floating about along every shore and utter to mortals a warning to try to shun the snares and violence and guile of the faithless sea, and never at any time to trust to it, when the winning face of calm ocean laughs treacherously; thus too if you shall once decide that certain first-beginnings are finite, different currents of matter must scatter and tumble them about through all time, so that they can never be brought into union and combine, nor abide in any union nor grow up and increase.

But plain matter of fact shows that each of these results manifestly does take place, that things can be brought into being and when begotten advance

in growth.

It is clear, then, that in any class you like, the first-beginnings of things are infinite, out of which all supplies are furnished.

Thus neither can death-dealing motions keep the mastery always nor entomb existence for evermore, nor on the other hand can the birth and increase giving motions of things preserve them always after they are born.

Thus the war of first beginnings waged from eternity is carried on with dubious issue: now here, now there, the life-bringing elements of things get the mastery and are overmastered in turn: with the funeral wail blends the cry which babies raise when they enter the borders of light; and no night ever followed day nor morning night that heard not mingling with the sickly infant's cries wailings the attendants on death and black funeral.

[579] And herein it is proper you should keep under seal, and guard, there consigned, in faithful memory this truth, that there is nothing whose nature is apparent to sense which consists of one kind of first-beginnings; nothing which is not formed by a mixing of seed.

And whenever a thing possesses in itself in larger measure many powers and properties, in that measure it shows that there are in it the greatest number of different kinds and varied shapes of first-beginnings.

First of all the earth has in her first bodies out of which springs rolling coolness along replenish without fail the boundless sea, she has bodies out of which fires rise up; for in many spots the earth's crust is on fire and burns, though headstrong Aetna rages with fire of surpassing force.

Then too she has bodies out of which she can raise for mankind goodly crops and joyous trees, out of which too she can supply to the mountain-ranging race of wild beasts rivers leaves and glad pastures.

Wherefore she has alone been named great mother of gods and mother of beasts and parent of our body.

Of her the old and learned poets of the Greeks have sung, that [borne aloft on high-raised] seat in a chariot she drives a pair of lions, teaching that the great earth hangs in the expanse of air and that earth cannot rest on earth.

To her chariot they have yoked wild beasts, because a brood however savage ought to be tamed and softened by the kind offices of parents.

They have encircled the top of her head with a mural crown, because fortified in choice positions she sustains towns; adorned with which emblem the image of the divine mother is carried now-a-days through wide lands in awe-inspiring state.

Her different nations after old-established ritual term Idaean mother, and give for escort Phrygian bands, because they tell that from those lands corn first began to be produced throughout the world.

They assign her *galli*, because they would show by this type that they who have done violence to the divinity of the mother and have proved ungrateful to their parents are to be deemed unworthy to bring a living offspring into the borders of light.

Tight-stretched tambourines and hollow cymbals resound all round to the stroke of their open hands, and horns menace with hoarse-sounding music, and the hollow pipe stirs their minds in Phrygian mood.

[621] They carry weapons before them, emblems of furious rage, meet to fill the thankless souls and godless breasts of the rabble with terror for the divinity of the goddess.

Therefore when first borne in procession through great cities she mutely enriches mortals with a blessing not expressed in words, they straw all her path with brass and silver presenting her with bounteous alms, and scatter over her a snow-shower of roses, overshadowing the mother and her troops of attendants.

Here an armed band to which the Greeks give the name of Phrygian Curetes, in that it haply joins in the game of arms and springs up in measure all dripping with blood, shaking with its nodding the frightful crests upon the head, represents the Dictæan Curetes who, as the story is, erst drowned in Crete that infant cry of Jove, when the young band about the young babe in rapid dance arms in hand to measured tread beat brass on brass, that Saturn might not get him to consign to his devouring jaws and stab the mother to the heart with a never-healing wound.

For these reasons they escort in arms the great mother, or else because they mean by this sign that the goddess preaches to men to be willing with arms and valor to defend their country and be ready to be a safeguard and an ornament to their parents.

All which, well and beautifully as it is set forth and told, is yet widely removed from true reason.

For the nature of gods must ever in itself of necessity enjoy immortality together with supreme of repose, far removed and withdrawn from our concerns; since exempt from every pain, exempt from all dangers, strong in its own resources, not wanting aught of us, it is neither gained by favors nor moved by anger.

And here if any one thinks proper to call the sea Neptune and corn Ceres and chooses rather to misuse the name of Bacchus than to utter the term that belongs to that liquor, let us allow him to declare that the earth is mother of the gods, if he only forbear in earnest to stain his mind with foul religion.

The earth however is at all times without feeling, and because it receives into it the first— beginnings of many things, it brings them forth in many ways into the light of the sun.

And so the woolly flocks and the martial breed of horses and homed herds, though often cropping the grass from one field beneath the same canopy of heaven and slaking their thirst from one stream of water, yet have all their life a dissimilar appearance and retain the nature of their parents and severally imitate their ways each after its kind: [665] so great is the diversity of matter in any kind of herbage, so great in every river.

And hence, too, any one you please out of the whole number of living

creatures is made up of bones, blood, vein, heat, moisture, flesh, sinews; and these things again differ widely from one another and are composed of first-beginnings of unlike shape.

Furthermore whatever things are set on fire and burned, store up in their body, if nothing else, at least those particles, out of which they may radiate fire and send out light and make sparks fly and scatter embers all about.

If you will go over all other things by a like process of reasoning, you will thus find that they conceal in their body the seeds of many things and contain elements of various shapes.

Again you see many things to which are given at once both color and taste together with smell; especially those many offerings [which are burned on the altars].

These must therefore be made up of elements of different shapes; for smell enters in where color passes not into the frame, color too in one way, taste in another makes its entrance into the senses; so that you know they differ in the shapes of their first elements.

Therefore unlike forms unite into one mass and things are made up of a mixture of seed.

Throughout moreover these very verses of ours you see many elements common to many words, though yet you must admit that the verses and words one with another are different and composed of different elements; not that but few letters which are in common run through them or that no two words or verses one with another are made up entirely of the same, but because as a rule they do not all resemble one the other.

Thus also though in other things there are many first-beginnings common to many things, yet they can make up one with the other a quite dissimilar whole; so that men and corn and joyous trees may fairly be said to consist of different elements.

And yet we are not to suppose that all things can be joined together in all ways; for then you would see prodigies produced on all hands, forms springing up half man half beast and sometimes tall boughs sprouting from the living body, and many limbs of land-creatures joined with those of sea-animals, nature too throughout the all-bearing lands feeding chimeras which breathed flames from noisome mouth.

[706] It is plain however that nothing of the sort is done, since we see that all things produced from fixed seeds and a fixed mother can in growing preserve the marks of their kind.

This you are to know must take place after a fixed law.

For the particles suitable for each thing from all kinds of food when inside the body pass into the frame and joining on produce the appropriate motions; but on the other hand we see nature throw out on the earth those that are alien, and many things with their unseen bodies fly out of the body impelled by blows: those I mean which have not been able to join on to any part nor when inside to feel in unison with and adopt the vital motions.

But lest you haply suppose that living things alone are bound by these conditions, such a law keeps all things within their limits.

For even as things begotten are in their whole nature all unlike one the other, thus each must consist of first-beginnings of unlike shape; not that a scanty number are possessed of a like form, but because as a rule they do not all resemble one the other.

Again since the seeds differ, there must be a difference in the spaces between, the passages, the connections, the weights, the blows, the clashing, the motions; all which not only disjoin living bodies, but hold apart the lands and the whole sea, and keep all heaven away from the earth.

Now mark, and apprehend precepts amassed by my welcome toil, lest haply you deem that those things which you see with your eyes to be bright, because white are formed of white principles, or that the things which are black are born from black seed, or that things which are steeped in any other color bear that color because the bodies of matter are dyed with a color like to it.

For the bodies of matter have no color at all either like to the things or unlike.

But if haply it seems to you that no impression of the mind can throw itself into these bodies, you wander far astray.

For since men born blind who have never beheld the light of the sun, yet recognize bodies by touch, though linked with no color for them from their first birth, you are to know that bodies can fall under the ken of our mind too, though stained with no color. Again, whatever things we ourselves touch in the thick darkness, we do not perceive to be dyed with any color.

And since I prove that this is the case, I will now show that there are things [which are possessed of no color].

[749] Well any color without any exception changes into any other; and this first-beginnings ought in no wise to do: something unchangeable must remain over, that all things be not utterly reduced to nothing.

For whenever a thing changes and quits its proper limits, at once this change of state is the death of that which it was before.

Therefore mind not to dye with color the seeds of things, that you may not have all things altogether returning to nothing.

Moreover, if no quality of color is assigned to first-beginnings and they are yet possessed of varied shapes out of which they beget colors of every kind and change them about by reason that it makes a great difference with what other seeds and in what position the seeds are severally held in union and what motions they mutually impart and receive, you can explain at once with the greatest ease why those things which just before were of a black color, may become all at once of marble whiteness; as the sea, when mighty winds have stirred up its waters, is changed into white waves of the brightness of marble: you may say that when the matter of that which we often see to be black has been mixed up anew and the arrangement of its first-beginnings has

been changed and some have been added and some been taken away, the immediate result is that it appears bright and white.

But if the waters of the sea consisted of azure seeds, they could in no wise become white; for however much you jumble together seeds which are azure, they can never pass into a marble color.

But if the seeds which make up the one unmixed brightness of the sea are dyed some with one, some with other colors, just as often out of different forms and varied shapes something square and of a uniform figure is made up, in that case it were natural that as we see unlike forms contained in the square, so we should see in the water of the sea or in any other one and unmixed brightness colors widely unlike and different to one another.

Moreover the unlike figures do not in the least hinder or prevent the whole figure from being a square on the outside; but the various colors of things are a let and hindrance to the whole things being of a uniform brightness.

Then too the reason which leads and draws us on sometimes to assign colors to the first-beginnings of things, falls to the ground, since white things are not produced from white, nor those which are black from black, but out of things of various colors.

[790] For white things will much more readily rise up and be born from no color than from a black or any other color which thwarts and opposes it.

Moreover since colors cannot exist without light and first-beginnings of things do not come out into the light, you may be sure they are clothed with no color.

For what color can there be in total darkness? Nay it changes in the light itself according as its brightness comes from a straight or slanting stroke of light.

After this fashion the down which encircles and crowns the nape and throat of doves shows itself in the sun: at one time it is ruddy with the hue of bright pyropus; at another it appears by a certain way of looking at it to blend with coral-red green emeralds.

The tail of the peacock when it is saturated with abundant light, changes in like fashion its colors as it turns about.

And since these colors are begotten by a certain stroke of light, sure enough you must believe that they cannot be produced without it.

And since the pupil receives into it a kind of blow, when it is said to perceive a white color, and then another, when it perceives black or any other colour, and since it is of no moment with what color the things which you touch are provided, but rather with what sort of shape they are furnished, you are to know that first-beginnings have no need of colors, but give forth sensations of touch varying according to their various shapes.

Moreover since no particular kind of color is assigned to particular shapes and every configuration of first-beginnings can exist in any color, why on a 'like principle are not the things which are formed out of them in every kind overlaid with colors of every kind? For then it were natural that crows too in

flying should often display a white color from whitewings and that swans should come to be black from a black seed, or of any other different color you please.

Again the more minute the parts are into which anything is rent, the more you may perceive the color fade away by little and little and become extinct; as for instance if a piece of purple is torn into small shreds: when it has been plucked into separate threads, the purple, and the scarlet far the most brilliant of colors, are quite effaced; [831] from which you may infer that the shreds part with all their color before they come back to the seeds of things.

Lastly, since you admit that all bodies do not utter a voice nor emit a smell, for this reason you do not assign sounds and smells to all.

So also since we cannot perceive all things with the eyes, you are to know that some things are as much denuded of color as others are without smell and devoid of sound, and that the keen discerning mind can just as well apprehend these things as it can take note of things which are destitute of other qualities.

But lest haply you suppose that first bodies remain stripped of color alone, they are also wholly devoid of warmth and cold and violent heat, and are judged to be barren of sound and drained of moisture, and emit from their body no scent of their own.

Just as when you set about preparing the balmy liquid of sweet marjoram and myrrh and the flower of spikenard which gives forth to the nostrils a scent like nectar, before all you should seek, so far as you may and can find it, the substance of scentless oil, such as gives out no perfume to the nostrils, that it may as little as possible meddle with and destroy by its own pungency the odors mixed in its body and boiled up with it; for the same reason the first-beginnings of things must not bring to the begetting of things a smell or sound of their own, since they cannot discharge anything from themselves, and for the same reason no taste either nor cold nor any heat moderate or violent, and the like.

For as these things, be they what they may, are still such as to be liable to death, whether pliant with a soft, brittle with a crumbling, or hollow with a porous body, they must all be withdrawn from the first beginnings, if we wish to assign to things imperishable foundations for the whole sum of existence to rest upon: that you may not have things returning altogether to nothing.

To come to another point, whatever things we perceive to have sense, you must yet admit all composed of senseless first-beginnings: manifest tokens which are open to all to apprehend, so far from refuting or contradicting this, do rather themselves take us by the hand and constrain us to believe that, as I say, living things are begotten from senseless things.

[871] We may see in fact living worms spring out of stinking dung, when the soaked earth has gotten putridity after excessive rains; and all things besides change in the same way: rivers leaves and glad pastures change into cattle, cattle change their substance into our bodies, and often out of these the powers of wild beasts and the bodies of the strong of wing are increased.

Therefore nature changes all foods into living bodies and engenders out of them all the senses of living creatures, much in the same way as she dissolves dry woods into flames and converts all things into fires.

Now do you see that it is of great moment in what sort of arrangement the first-beginnings of things are severally placed and with what others they are mixed up, when they impart and receive motions? Then again what is that which strikes your mind, affects that mind and constrains it to give utterance to many different thoughts, to save you from believing that the sensible is begotten out of senseless things? Sure enough it is because stones and wood and earth however mixed together are yet unable to produce vital sense.

This therefore it will be well to remember herein, that I do not assert that the sensible and sensations are forthwith begotten out of all elements without exception which produce things; but that it is of great moment first how minute the particles are which make up the sensible thing and then what shape they possess and what in short they are in their motions arrangements and positions.

None of which conditions we find in woods and clods; and yet even these when they have so to speak become rotten through the rains bring forth worms, because bodies of matter driven from their ancient arrangements by a new condition are combined in the manner needed for the begetting of living creatures.

Next they who hold that the sensible can be produced out of sensible elements, accustomed thus to derive their own sense from elements [which are sensible] in their turn, [do thus render their own seeds mortal,] when they make them soft; for all sense is bound up with flesh, sinews and veins; which in everything ye see to be soft and formed of a mortal body.

But even suppose that these things can remain eternal: they must yet I presume either have the sense of some part or else be deemed to possess a sense similar to the entire living creatures.

[910] But the parts cannot possibly have sense by themselves alone; for all sense of the different members has reference to something else; nor can the hand when severed from us nor any other part of the body whatever by itself maintain sensation.

It remains to assume that they resemble the entire living creatures.

In this case it is necessary that they should feel the things which we feel in the same way as we do, in order that they may be able in all points to work in concert with the vital sense.

How then can they be called first-beginnings of things and shun the paths of death, seeing that they are living things, and that living things are one and the same with mortal things?

Nay, granting they could do this, yet by their meeting and union they will make nothing but a jumble and medley of living things; just you are to know as men cattle and wild beasts would be unable to beget any other thing by all their mixing with one another.

But if haply they lose from their body their own sense and adopt another, what use was it to assign what is again withdrawn? Moreover, the instance to which we had before recourse, inasmuch as we see the eggs of fowls change into living chicks and worms burst forth, when putridity has seized on the earth after excessive rains, you are to know that sensations can be begotten out of no-sensations.

But if haply any one shall say that sense so far may arise from no-sensation by a process of change, or because it is brought forth by a kind of birth, it will be enough to make plain and to prove to him that no birth takes place until a union of elements has first been effected, and that nothing changes without their having been united.

Above all senses cannot exist in any body before the nature of the living thing itself has been begotten because sure enough the matter remains scattered about in air, rivers, earth, and things produced from earth, and has not met together and combined in appropriate fashion the vital motions by which the all-discerning senses are kindled into action in each living thing.

Again a blow more severe than its nature can endure, prostrates at once any living thing and goes on to stun all the senses of body and mind.

For the positions of the first-beginnings are broken up and the vital motions entirely stopped, until the matter, disordered by the shock through the whole frame, unties from the body the vital fastenings of the soul and scatters it abroad and forces it out through all the pores.

[950] For what more can we suppose the infliction of a blow can do, than shake from their place and break up the union of the several elements?

Often too when the blow is inflicted with less violence, the remaining vital motions are wont to prevail, ay, prevail and still the huge disorders caused by the blow and recall each part into its proper channels and shake off the motion of death now reigning as it were paramount in the body and kindle afresh the almost lost senses.

For in what other way should the thing be able to gather together its powers of mind and come back to life from the very threshold of death, rather than pass on to the goal to which it had almost run and so pass away? Again since there is pain when the bodies of matter are disordered by any force throughout the living flesh and frame, and quake in their seats within, and as when they travel back into their place, a soothing pleasure ensues, you are to know that first-beginnings can be assailed by no pain and can derive no pleasure from themselves; since they are not formed of any bodies of first-beginnings, so as to be distressed by any novelty in their motion or derive from it any fruit of fostering delight; and therefore they must not be possessed of any sense.

Again if in order that living creatures may severally have sense, sense is to be assigned to their first-beginnings as well, what are we to say of those of which mankind is specifically made?

Sure enough they burst into fits of shaking laughter and sprinkle with dewy

tears face and cheeks and have the cunning to say much about the composition of things and to inquire next what their own first-beginnings are; since like in their natures to the entire mortals they must in their turn be formed out of other elements, then those others out of others, so that you can venture nowhere to come to a stop: yes, whatever you shall say speaks and laughs and thinks, I will press you with the argument that it is formed of other things performing these same acts.

But if we see these notions to be sheer folly and madness, and a man may laugh though not made of laughing things, and think and reason in learned language though not formed of thoughtful and eloquent seeds, why cannot the things which we see to have sense, just as well be made up of a mixture of things altogether devoid of sense?

[190] Again we are all sprung from a heavenly seed, all have that same father, by whom mother earth the giver of increase, when she has taken in from him liquid drops of moisture, conceives and bears goodly crops and joyous trees and the race of man, bears all kinds of brute beasts, in that she supplies food with which all feed their bodies and lead a pleasant life and continue their race; wherefore with good cause she has gotten the name of mother.

That also which before was from the earth, passes back into the earth, and that which was sent from the borders of ether, is carried back and taken in again by the quarters of heaven.

Death does not extinguish things in such way as to destroy the bodies of matter, but only breaks up the union amongst them, and then joins anew the different elements with others; and thus it comes to pass that all things change their shapes and alter their colors and receive sensations and in a moment yield them up; so that from all this you may know it matters much with what others and in what position the same first-beginnings of things are held in union and what motions they do mutually impart and receive, and you must not suppose that that which we see floating about on the surface of things and now born, then at once perishing, can be a property inherent in everlasting first bodies.

Nay in our verses themselves it matters much with what other elements and in what kind of order the several elements are placed.

If not all, yet by far the greatest number are alike; but the totals composed of them are made to differ by the position of these elements.

Thus in actual things, as well, when the clashing potions, arrangement, position and shapes of matter change about, the things must also change.

Apply now, we entreat, your mind to true reason.

For a new question struggles earnestly to gain your ears, a new aspect of things to display itself.

But there is nothing so easy as not to be at first more difficult to believe than afterwards; and nothing, too so great, so marvelous, that all do not gradually abate their admiration of it.

Look up at the bright and unsullied hue of heaven and the stars which it holds within it, wandering all about, and the moon and the sun's light of dazzling brilliancy: ^[1032] if all these things were now for the first time, if I say they were now suddenly presented to mortals beyond all expectation, what could have been named that would be more marvelous than these things, or that nations beforehand would less venture to believe could be?

Nothing, methinks: so wondrous strange had been this sight.

Yet how little, you know, wearied as all are to satiety with seeing, any one now cares to look up into heaven's glittering quarters! Cease therefore to be dismayed by the mere novelty and so to reject reason from your mind with loathing: weigh the questions rather with keen judgment and if they seem to you to be true, surrender, or if they are a falsehood, gird yourself to the encounter.

For since the sum of space is unlimited outside beyond these walls of the world, the mind seeks to apprehend what there is yonder there, to which the spirit ever yearns to look forward, and to which the mind's emission reaches in free and unembarrassed flight.

In the first place we see that round in all directions, about above and underneath, throughout the universe there is no bound, as I have shown and as the thing of itself proclaims with loud voice and as clearly shines out in the nature of bottomless space.

In no wise then can it be deemed probable, when space yawns illimitable towards all points and seeds in number numberless and sum unfathomable fly about in manifold ways driven on in ceaseless motion, that this single earth and heaven have been brought into being, that those bodies of matter so many in number do nothing outside them; the more so that this world has been made by nature, just as the seeds of things have chanced spontaneously to clash, after being brought together in manifold wise without purpose, without foresight, without result, and at last have filtered through such seeds as, suddenly thrown together, were fitted to become on each occasion the rudiments of great things, of earth sea and heaven and the race of living things.

Wherefore again and again I say you must admit that there are elsewhere other combinations of matter like to this with ether holds in its greedy grasp.

Again when much matter is at hand, when room is there and there is no thing, no cause to hinder, things sure enough must go on and be completed.

Well, then, if on the one hand there is so great a store of seeds as the whole life of living creatures cannot reckon up, and if the same force and nature abide in them and have the power to throw the seeds of things together into their several places in the same way as they are thrown together into our world, you must admit that in other parts of space there -are other earths and various races of men and kinds of wild beasts.

^[1077] Moreover in the sum of all there is no one thing which is begotten single in its kind and grows up single and sole of its kind; but a thing always

belongs to some class and there are many other things in the same kind.

First, in the case of living things, most noble Memmius, you will find that in this sort has been begotten the mountain-ranging race of wild beasts, in this sort the breed of men, in this sort too the mute shoals of scaly creatures and all bodies of fowls.

Therefore on a like principle you must admit that earth, and sun, moon, sea, and all things else that are, are not single in their kind, but rather in number past numbering; since the deep-set boundary-mark of life just as much awaits these and they are just as much of a body that had birth, as any class of things which here on earth abounds in samples of its kind.

If you well apprehend and keep in mind these things, nature free at once and rid of her haughty lords is seen to do all things spontaneously of herself without the meddling of the gods.

For I appeal to the holy breasts of the gods who in tranquil peace pass a calm time and an unruffled existence, who can rule the sum, who can hold in his hand with controlling force the strong reins, of the immeasurable deep?

Who can at once make all the different heavens to roll and warm with ethereal fires all the fruitful earths, or be present in all places at all times, to bring darkness with clouds and shake with noise the heaven's serene expanse, to hurl lightnings and often throw down his own temples, and withdrawing into the deserts there to spend his rage in practicing his bolt which often passes the guilty by and strikes dead the innocent and unoffending?

And since the birth-time of the world and first day of being to sea and earth and the formation of the sun many bodies have been added from without, many seeds added all round, which the great universe in tossing to and fro has contributed; that from them the sea and lands might increase and from them heaven's mansion might enlarge its expanse and raise its high vaults far above earth, and that air might rise up around.

[1111] For all bodies from all quarters are assigned by blows each to its appropriate thing and all withdraw to their proper classes; moisture passes to moisture, from an earthy body earth increases and fires forge fires and ether ether, until nature parent of things with finishing hand has brought all things on to their utmost limit of growth.

And this comes to pass when that which is infused into the life-arteries is no more than that which ebbs from them and withdraws: at this point the life-growth in all things must stop, at this point nature by her powers checks further increase.

For whatever things you see grow in size with joyous increase and mount by successive steps to mature age, take to themselves more bodies than they discharge from themselves, while food is readily infused into all the arteries and the things are not so widely spread out as to throw off many particles and occasion more waste than their age can take in as nourishment.

For no doubt it must be conceded that many bodies ebb away and withdraw from things; but still more must join them, until they have touched the utmost

point of growth.

Then piece by piece age breaks their powers and matured strength and wastes away on the side of decay.

For the larger a thing is and the wider, as soon as its growth is stopped, at once it sheds abroad and discharges from it more bodies in all directions round; and its food is not readily transmitted into all its arteries and is not enough, in proportion to the copious exhalations which the thing throws off, to enable a like amount to rise up and be supplied.

For food must keep all things entire by renewing them, food must uphold, food sustain all things: all in vain, since the arteries refuse to hold what is sufficient, and nature does not furnish the needful amount.

With good reason therefore all things perish, when they have been rarefied by the ebb of particles and succumb to blows without, since food sooner or later fails advanced age, and bodies never cease to destroy a thing by thumping it from without and to overpower it by aggressive blows.

In this way then the walls too of the great world around shall be stormed and fall to decay and crumbling ruin.

Yes and even now the age is enfeebled and the earth exhausted by bearing scarce produces little living creatures, she who produced all races and gave birth to the huge bodies of wild beasts.

[1153] For methinks no golden chain let down to earth from heaven above the races of mortal beings, nor did the sea and waves which lash the rocks produce them, but the same earth bare them which now feeds them out of herself.

Moreover she first spontaneously of herself produced for mortals goodly corn-crops and joyous vineyards; of herself gave sweet fruits and glad pastures; which now-a-days scarce attain any size when furthered by our labor: we exhaust the oxen and the strength of the husbandmen; we wear out our iron, scarcely fed after all by the tilled fields; so niggardly are they of their produce and after so much labor do they let it grow.

And now the aged plowman shakes his head and sighs again and again to think that the labors of his hands have come to nothing; and when he compares present times with times past, he often praises the fortunes of his sire and harps on the theme, how the men of old rich in piety comfortably supported life on a scanty plot of ground, since the allotment of land to each man was far less of yore than now.

The sorrowful planter too of the exhausted and shriveled vine impeaches the march of time and wearies heaven, and comprehends not that all things are gradually wasting away and passing to the grave, quite forspent by age and length of days.

BOOK III.

[1] THEE, who first was able amid such thick darkness to raise on high so bright a beacon and shed a light on the true interests of life, thee I follow, glory of the Greek race, and plant now my footsteps firmly fixed in thy imprinted marks, not so much from a desire to rival thee as that from the love I bear thee I yearn to imitate thee; for why need the swallow contend with swans, or what likeness is there between the feats of racing performed by kids with tottering limbs and by the powerful strength of the horse? Thou, father, art discoverer of things, thou furnishest us with fatherly precepts, and like as bees sip of all things in the flowery lawns, we, o glorious being, in like manner feed from out thy pages upon all the golden maxims, golden I say, most worthy ever of endless life.

For soon as thy philosophy issuing from a godlike intellect has begun with loud voice to proclaim the nature of things, the terrors of the mind are dispelled, the walls of the world part asunder, I see things in operation throughout the whole void: the divinity of the gods is revealed and their tranquil abodes which neither winds do shake nor clouds drench with rains nor snow congealed by sharp frosts harms with hoary fall: an ever-cloudless ether overcanopies them, and they laugh with light shed largely round.

Nature too supplies all their wants and nothing ever impairs their peace of mind.

But on the other hand the Acherusian quarters are nowhere to be seen, though earth is no bar to all things being descried, which are in operation underneath our feet throughout the void.

At all this a kind of godlike delight mixed with shuddering awe comes over me to think that nature by thy power is laid thus visibly open, is thus unveiled on every side.

[30] And now since I have shown what-like the beginnings of all things are and how diverse with varied shapes as they fly spontaneously driven on in everlasting motion, and how all things can be severally produced out of these, next after these questions the nature of the mind and soul should methinks be cleared up by my verses and that dread of Acheron be driven headlong forth, troubling as it does the life of man from its inmost depths and over spreading all things with the blackness of death, allowing no pleasure to be pure and unalloyed.

For as to what men often give out that diseases and a life of shame are more to be feared than Tartarus' place of death, and that they know the soul to be of blood or it maybe of wind, if haply their choice so direct, and that they have no need at all of our philosophy, you may perceive for the following reasons that all these boasts are thrown out more for glory's sake than because the thing is really believed.

These very men, exiles from their country and banished far from the sight

of men, live degraded by foul charge of guilt, sunk in a word in every kind of misery, and whithersoever the poor wretches are come, they yet do offer sacrifices to the dead and slaughter black sheep and make libations to the gods manes, and in times of distress turn their thoughts to religion much more earnestly.

Wherefore you can better test the man in doubts and dangers and mid adversity learn who he is; for then and not till then the words of truth are forced out from the bottom of his heart: the mask is torn off, the reality is left.

Avarice again and blind lust of honors which constrain unhappy men to overstep the bounds of right and sometimes as partners and agents of crimes to strive night and day with surpassing effort to struggle up to the summit of power, these sores of life are in no small measure fostered by the dread of death.

For foul scorn and pinching want in every case are seen to be far removed from a life of pleasure and security and to be a loitering so to say before the gates of death.

And while men driven on by an unreal dread wish to escape far away from these and keep them far from them, they amass wealth by civil bloodshed and greedily double their riches piling up murder on murder; cruelly triumph in the sad death of a brother and hate and fear the tables of kinsfolk.

Often likewise from the same fear envy causes them to pine: [75] they make moan that before their very eye she is powerful, he attracts attention, who walks arrayed in gorgeous dignity, while they are wallowing in darkness and dirt.

Some wear themselves to death for the sake of statues and a name.

And often to such a degree through dread of death does hate of life and of the sight of daylight seize upon mortals, that they commit self-murder with a sorrowing heart, quite forgetting that this fear is the source of their cares, [this fear which urges men to every sin] prompts this one to put all shame to route, another to burst asunder the bonds of friendship, and in fine to overturn duty from its very base; since often ere now men have betrayed country and dear parents in seeking to shun the Acherusian quarters.

For even as children are flurried and dread all things in the thick darkness, thus we in the daylight fear at times things not a whit more to be dreaded than what children shudder at in the dark and fancy sure to be.

This terror therefore and darkness of mind must be dispelled not by the rays of the sun and glittering shafts of day, but by the aspect and law of nature.

First then I say that the mind which we often call the understanding, in which dwells the directing and governing principle of life, is no less part of the man than hand and foot and eyes are parts of the whole living creature.

[Some however affirm] that the sense of the mind does not dwell in a distinct part, but is a certain vital state of the body, which the Greeks call *harmonia*, because by it, they say, we live with sense, though the

understanding is in no one part; just as when good health is said to belong to the body, though yet it is not any one part of the man in health.

In this way they do not assign a distinct part to the sense of the mind; in all which they appear to me to be grievously at fault in more ways than one.

Often times the body which is visible to sight, is sick, while yet we have pleasure in another hidden part; and oftentimes the case is the very reverse, the man who is unhappy in mind feeling pleasure in his whole body; just as if, while a sick man's foot is pained, the head meanwhile should, be in no pain at all.

Moreover when the limbs are consigned to soft sleep and the burdened body lies diffused without sense, there is yet a something else in us which during that time is moved in many ways and admits into it all the motions of joy and unreal cares of the heart.

[115] Now that you may know that the soul as well is in the limbs and that the body is not wont to have sense by any harmony, this is a main proof: when much of the body has been taken away, still life often stays in the limbs; and yet the same life, when a few bodies of heat have been dispersed abroad, and some air has been forced out through the mouth, abandons at once the veins and quits the bones: by this you may perceive that all bodies have not functions of like importance or alike uphold existence, but rather that those seeds which constitute wind and heat, cause life to stay in the limbs.

Therefore vital heat and wind are within the body and abandon our frame at death.

Since then the nature of the mind and that of the soul have been proved to be a part, as it were of the man, surrender the name of harmony, whether brought down to musicians from high Helicon, or whether rather they have themselves taken it from something else and transferred it to that thing which then was in need of a distinctive name; whatever it be, let them keep it: do you take in the rest of my precepts.

Now I assert that the mind and the soul are kept together in close union and make up a single nature, but that the directing principle which we call mind and understanding is the head, so to speak, and reigns paramount in the whole body.

It has a fixed seat in the middle region of the breast: here throb fear and apprehension, about these spots dwell soothing joys; therefore here is the understanding or mind.

All the rest of the soul disseminated through the whole body obeys and moves at the will and inclination of the mind.

It by itself alone knows for itself, rejoices for itself, at times when the impression does not move either soul or body together with it.

And as when some part of us, the head or the eye, suffers from an attack of pain, we do not feel the anguish at the same time over the whole body, thus the mind sometimes suffers pain by itself or is inspirited with joy, when all the rest of the soul throughout the limbs and frame is stirred by no novel

sensation.

But when the mind is excited by some more vehement apprehension, we see the whole soul feel in unison through all the limbs, sweats and paleness spread over the whole body, the tongue falter, the voice die away, a mist cover the eyes, the ears ring, the limbs sink under one; [157] in short we often see men drop down from terror of mind; so that anybody may easily perceive from this that the soul is closely united with the mind, and, when it has been smitten by the influence of the mind, forthwith pushes and strikes the body.

This same principle teaches that the nature of the mind and soul is bodily; for when it is seen to push the limbs, rouse the body from sleep, and alter the countenance and guide and turn about the whole man, and when we see that none of these effects can take place without touch nor touch without body, must we not admit that the mind and the soul are of a bodily nature?

Again you perceive that our mind in our body suffers together with the body and feels in unison with it.

When a weapon with a shudder-causing force has been driven in and has laid bare bones and sinews within the body, if it does not take life, yet there ensues a faintness and a lazy sinking to the ground and on the ground the turmoil of mind which arises, and sometimes a kind of undecided inclination to get up.

Therefore the nature of the mind must be bodily, since it suffers from bodily weapons and blows.

I will now go on to explain in my verses of what kind of body the mind consists and out of what it is formed.

First of all I say that it is extremely fine and formed of exceedingly minute bodies.

That this is so you may, if you please to attend, clearly perceive from what follows: nothing that is seen takes place with a velocity equal to that of the mind when it starts some suggestion and actually sets it a-going; the mind therefore is stirred with greater rapidity than any of the things whose nature stands out visible to sight.

But that which is so passing nimble, must consist of seeds exceedingly round and exceedingly minute, in order to be stirred and set in motion by a small moving power.

Thus water is moved and heaves by ever so small a force, formed as it is of small particles apt to roll.

But on the other hand the nature of honey is more sticky, its liquid more sluggish and its movement more dilatory; for the whole mass of matter coheres more closely, because sure enough it is made of bodies not so smooth fine and round.

A breeze however gentle and light can force, as you may see, a high heap of poppy seed to be blown away from the top downwards; but on the other hand eurus itself cannot move a heap of stones.

[199] Therefore bodies possess a power of moving in proportion to their

smallness and smoothness; and on the other hand the greater weight and roughness bodies prove to have, the more stable they are.

Since then the nature of the mind has been found to be eminently easy to move, it must consist of bodies exceedingly small smooth and round.

The knowledge of which fact, my good friend, will on many accounts prove useful and be serviceable to you.

The following fact too likewise demonstrates how fine the texture is of which its nature is composed, and how small the room is in which it can be contained, could it only be collected into one mass: soon as the untroubled sleep of death has gotten hold of a man and the nature of the mind and soul has withdrawn, you can perceive then no diminution of the entire body either in appearance or weight: death makes all good save the vital sense and heat.

Therefore the whole soul must consist of very small seeds and be in woven through veins and flesh and sinews; inasmuch as after it has all withdrawn from the whole body, the exterior contour of the limbs preserves itself entire and not a tittle of the weight is lost.

Just in the same way when the flavor of whine is gone or when the delicious aroma of a perfume has been dispersed into the air or when the savor has left some body, yet the thing itself does not therefore look smaller to the eye, nor does aught seem to have been taken from the weight, because sure enough many minute seeds make up the saviors and the odor in the whole body of the several things.

Therefore, again and again I say, you are to know that the nature of the mind and the soul has been formed of exceedingly minute seeds, since at its departure it takes away none of the weight.

We are not however to suppose that this nature is single.

For a certain subtle spirit mixed with heat quits men at death, and then the heat draws air along with it; there being no heat which has not air too mixed with it: for since its nature is rare, many first beginnings of air must move about through it.

Thus the nature of the mind is proved to be threefold; and yet these things all together are not sufficient to produce sense; since the fact of the case does not admit that any of these can produce sense-giving motions and the thoughts which a man turns over in mind.

Thus some fourth nature too must be added to these: it is altogether without name; [243] than it nothing exists more nimble or more fine, or of smaller or smoother elements: it first transmits the sense-giving motions through the frame; for it is first stirred, made up as it is of small particles; next the heat and the unseen force of the spirit receive the motions, then the air; then all things are set in action, the blood is stirred, every part of the flesh is filled with sensation; last of all the feeling is transmitted to the bones and marrow, whether it be one of pleasure or an opposite excitement.

No pain however can lightly pierce thus far nor any sharp malady make its way in, without all things being so thoroughly disordered that no room is left

for life and the parts of the soul fly abroad through all the pores of the body.

But commonly a stop is put to these motions on the surface as it were of the body: for this reason we are able to retain life.

Now though I would fain explain in what way these are mixed up together, by what means united, when they exert their powers, the poverty of my native speech deters me sorely against my will: yet will I touch upon them and in summary fashion to the best of my ability: the first-beginnings by their mutual motions are interlaced in such a way that, none of them can be separated by itself, nor can the function of any go on divided from the rest by any interval; but they are so to say the several powers of one body.

Even so in any flesh of living creature you please without exception there is smell and some color and a savor, and yet out of all these is made up one single bulk of body.

Thus the heat and the air and the unseen power of the spirit mixed together produce a single nature, together with that nimble force which transmits to them from itself the origin of motion; by which means sense-giving motion first takes its rise through the fleshly frame.

For this nature lurks secreted in its inmost depths, and nothing in our body is farther beneath all ken than it, and more than this it is the very soul of the whole soul.

Just in the same way as the power of the mind and the function of the soul are latent in our limbs and throughout our body, because they are each formed of small and few bodies: even so, you are to know, this nameless power made of minute bodies is concealed and is moreover the very soul so to say of the whole soul, and reigns supreme in the whole body.

On a like principle the spirit and air and heat must, as they exert their powers, be mixed up together through the frame, and one must ever be more out of view or more prominent than another, that a single substance may be seen to be formed from the union of all, lest the heat and spirit apart by themselves and the power of the air apart by itself should destroy sense and dissipate it by their disunion.

[289] Thus the mind possesses that heat which it displays when it boils up in anger and fire flashes from the keen eyes; there is too much cold spirit, comrade of fear, which spreads a shivering over the limbs and stirs the whole frame; yes and there is also that condition of still air which has place when the breast is calm and the looks cheerful.

But they have more of the hot whose keen heart and passionate mind lightly boil up in anger.

Foremost in this class comes the fierce violence of lions who often as they chafe break their hearts with their roaring and cannot contain within their breast the billows of their rage.

Then the chilly mind of stags is fuller of the spirit and more quickly rouses through all the flesh its icy currents which cause a shivering motion to pass over the limbs.

But the nature of oxen has its life rather from the still air, and never does the smoky torch of anger applied to it stimulate it too much, shedding over it the shadow of murky gloom, nor is it transfixed and stiffened by the icy shafts of fear: it lies between the other two, stags and cruel lions.

And thus it is with mankind: however much teaching renders some equally refined, it yet leaves behind those earliest traces of the nature of each mind; and we are not to suppose that evil habits can be so thoroughly plucked up by the roots, that one man shall not be more prone than another to keen anger, a second shall not be somewhat more quickly assailed by fear, a third shall not take some things more meekly than is right.

In many other points there must be differences between the varied natures of men and the tempers which follow upon these; though at present I am unable to set forth the hidden causes of these or to find names enough for the different shapes which belong to the first-beginnings from which shapes arises this diversity of things.

What herein I think I may affirm is this: traces of the different natures left behind, which reason is unable to expel from us, are so exceedingly slight that there is nothing to hinder us from living a life worthy of gods.

Well this nature is contained by the whole body and is in turn the body's guardian and the cause of its existence; for the two adhere together with common roots and cannot, it is plain, be riven asunder without destruction.

[326] Even as it is not easy to pluck the perfume out of lumps of frankincense without quite destroying its nature as well; so it is not easy to withdraw from the whole body the nature of the mind and soul without dissolving all alike.

With first-beginnings so interlaced from their earliest birth are they formed and gifted with a life of joint partnership, and it is plain that the faculty of the body and of the mind cannot feel separately, each alone without the other's power, but sense is kindled throughout our flesh and blown into flame between the two by the joint motions on the part of both.

Moreover the body by itself is never either begotten or grows or, it is plain, continues to exist after death.

For not in the way that the liquid of water often loses the heat which has been given to it, yet is not for that reason itself riven in pieces, but remains unimpaired, – not in this way, I say, can the abandoned frame endure the separation of the soul, but riven in pieces it utterly perishes and rots away.

Thus the mutual connections of body and soul from the first moment of their existence learn the vital motions even while hid in the body and womb of the mother, so that no separation can take place without mischief and ruin.

Thus you may see that, since the cause of existence lies in their joint action, their nature too must be a joint nature.

Furthermore, if any one tries to disprove that the body feels and believes that the soul mixed through the whole body takes upon it this motion which we name sense, he combats even manifest and undoubted facts.

For who will ever bring forward any explanation of what the body's feeling is, except that which the plain fact of the case has itself given and taught to us?

But when the soul it is said has departed, the body throughout is without sense; yes, for it loses what was not its own peculiar property in life; ay and much else it loses, before that soul is driven out of it.

Again to say that the eyes can see no object, but that the soul discerns through them as through an open door, is far from easy, since their sense contradicts this; for this sense even draws it and forces it out to the pupil: nay, often we are unable to perceive shining things because our eyes are embarrassed by the lights.

But this is not the case with doors; for because we ourselves see, the open doors do not therefore undergo any fatigue.

[367] Again, if our eyes are in the place of doors, in that case when the eyes are removed the mind ought it would seem to have more power of seeing things, after doors, jambs and all, have been taken out of the way.

And herein you must by no means adopt the opinion which the revered judgment of the worthy man Democritus lays down, that the first-beginnings of body and mind placed together in successive layers come in alternate order and so weave the tissue of our limbs.

For not only are the elements of the soul much smaller than those of which our body and flesh are formed, but they are also much fewer in number and are disseminated merely in scanty number through the frame, so that you can warrant no more than this: the first-beginnings of the soul keep spaces between them at least as great as are the smallest bodies which, if thrown upon it, are first able to excite in our body the sense-giving motions.

Thus at times we do not feel the adhesion of dust when it settles on our body, nor the impact of chalk when it rests on our limbs, nor do we feel a mist at night nor a spider's slender threads as they come against us, when we are caught in its meshes in moving along, nor the same insect's flimsy web when it has fallen on our head, nor the feathers of birds and down of plants as it flies about, which commonly from exceeding lightness does not lightly fall, nor do we feel the tread of every creeping creature whatsoever nor each particular foot-print which gnats and the like stamp on our body.

So very many first-beginnings must be stirred in us, before the seeds of the soul mixed up in our bodies feel that these have been disturbed, and by thumping with such spaces between can clash unite and in turn recoil.

The mind has more to do with holding the fastnesses of life and has more sovereign sway over it than the power of the soul.

For without the understanding and the mind no part of the soul can maintain itself in the frame the smallest fraction of time, but follows at once in the other's train and passes away into the air and leaves the cold limbs in the chill of death.

But he abides in life whose mind and understanding continue to stay with

him: though the trunk is mangled with its limbs shorn all roundabout it, after the soul has been taken away on all sides and been severed from the limbs the trunk yet lives and inhales the ethereal airs of life.

[405] When robbed, if not of the whole, yet of a large portion of the soul, it still lingers in and cleaves to life just as, after the eye has been lacerated if the pupil has continued uninjured, the living power of sight remains, provided always you do not destroy the whole ball of the eye and pare close round the pupil and leave only it; for that will not be done even to the ball without the entire destruction of the eye.

But if that middle portion of the eye, small as it is, is eaten into, the sight is gone at once and darkness ensues, though a man have the bright ball quite unimpaired.

On such terms of union soul and mind are ever bound to each other.

Now mark me: that you may know that the minds and light souls of living creatures have birth and are mortal, I will go on to set forth verses worthy of your attention, got together by long study and invented with welcome effort.

Do you mind to link to one name both of them alike, and when for instance I shall choose to speak of the soul, showing it to be mortal, believe that I speak of the mind as well, inasmuch as both make up one thing and are one united substance.

First of all then since I have shown the soul to be fine and to be formed of minute bodies and made up of much smaller first-beginnings than is the liquid of water or mist or smoke: for it far surpasses these in nimbleness and is moved, when struck by a far slenderer cause; inasmuch as it is moved by images of smoke and mist; as when for instance sunk in sleep we see altars steam forth their heat and send up their smoke on high; for beyond a doubt images are begotten for us from these things: well then since you see on the vessels being shattered the water flow away on all sides, and since mist and smoke pass away into air, believe that the soul too is shed abroad and perishes much more quickly and dissolves sooner into its first bodies, when once it has been taken out of the limbs of a man and has withdrawn.

For, when the body that serves for its vessel cannot hold it, if shattered from any cause and rarefied by the withdrawal of blood from the veins, how can you believe that this soul can be held by any air?

How can that air which is rarer than our body hold it in?

Again we perceive that the mind is begotten along with the body and grows up together with it and becomes old along with it.

[446] For even as children go about with a tottering and weakly body, so slender sagacity of mind follows along with it; then when their life has reached the maturity of confirmed strength, the judgment too is greater and the power of the mind more developed.

Afterwards when the body has been shattered by the mastering might of time and the frame has drooped with its forces dulled, then the intellect halts, the tongue dotes, the mind gives way, all faculties fail and are found wanting

at the same time.

It naturally follows then that the whole nature of the soul is dissolved, like smoke, into the high air; since we see it is begotten along with the body and grows up along with it and, as I have shown, breaks down at the same time worn out with age.

Moreover we see that even as the body is liable to violent diseases and severe pain, so is the mind to sharp cares and grief and fear; it naturally follows therefore that it is its partner in death as well.

Again in diseases of the body the mind often wanders and goes astray; for it loses its reason and drives in its speech and often in a profound lethargy is carried into deep and never-ending sleep with drooping eyes and head; out of which it neither hears the voices nor can recognize the faces of those who stand round calling it back to life and bedewing with tears face and cheeks.

Therefore you must admit that the mind too dissolves, since the infection of disease reaches to it; for pain and disease are both forgers of death: a truth we have fully learned ere now by the death of many.

Again, when the pungent strength of wine has entered into a man and its spirit has been infused into and transmitted through his veins, why is it that a heaviness of the limbs follows along with this, his legs are hampered as he reels about, his tongue falters, his mind is besotted, his eyes swim, shouting hiccapping, wranglings are rife, together with all the other usual concomitants, why is all this, if not because the overpowering violence of the wine is wont to disorder the soul within the body?

But whenever things can be disordered and hampered, they give token that if a somewhat more potent cause gained an entrance, they would perish and be robbed of all further existence.

Moreover it often happens that someone constrained by the violence of disease suddenly drops down before our eyes, as by a stroke of lightning, and foams at the mouth, moans and shivers through his frame, loses his reason, stiffens his muscles, is racked, gasps for breath fitfully, and wearies his limbs with tossing.

[492] Sure enough, because the violence of the disease spreads itself through his frame and disorders him, he foams as he tries to eject his soul, just as in the salt sea the waters boil with the mastering might of the winds.

A moan too is forced out, because the limbs are seized with pain, and mainly because seeds of voice are driven forth and are carried in a close mass out by the mouth, the road which they are accustomed to take and where they have a well-paved way.

Loss of reason follows, because the powers of the mind and soul are disordered and, as I have shown, are riven and forced asunder, torn to pieces by the same baneful malady.

Then after the cause of the disease has bent its course back and the acrid humors of the distempered body return to their hiding-places, then he first gets up like one reeling, and by little and little, comes back into full possession of

his senses and regains his soul.

Since therefore even within the body mind and soul are harassed by such violent distempers and so miserably racked by sufferings, why believe that they without the body in the open air can continue existence battling with fierce winds?

And since we perceive that the mind is healed like the sick body, and we see that it can be altered by medicine, this too gives warning that the mind has a mortal existence.

For it is natural that whosoever essays and attempts to change the mind or seeks to alter any other nature you like, should add new parts or change the arrangement of the present, or withdraw in short some tittle from the sum.

But that which is immortal wills not to have its parts transposed nor any addition to be made nor one tittle to ebb away; for whenever a thing changes and quits its proper limits, this change is at once the death of that which was before.

Therefore the mind, whether it is sick or whether it is altered by medicine alike, as I have shown, gives forth mortal symptoms.

So invariably is truth found to make head against false reason and to cut off all retreat from the assailant, and by a two-fold refutation to put falsehood to rout.

Again we often see a man pass gradually away and limb by limb lose vital sense; first the toes of his feet and the nails turn livid, then the feet and shanks die, then next the steps of chilly death creep with slow pace over the other members. [529] Therefore since the nature of the soul is rent and passes away and does not at one time stand forth in its entirety, it must be reckoned mortal.

But if haply you suppose that it can draw itself in through the whole frame and mass its parts together and in this way withdraw sense from all the limbs, yet then that spot into which so great a store of soul is gathered ought to show itself in possession of a greater amount of sense.

But as this is nowhere found, sure enough as we said before, it is torn in pieces and scattered abroad, and therefore dies.

Moreover if I were pleased for the moment to grant what is false and admit that the soul might be collected in one mass in the body of those who leave the light dying piecemeal, even then you must admit the soul to be mortal; and it makes no difference whether it perish dispersed in air, or gathered into one lump out of all its parts lose all feeling, since sense ever more and more fails the whole man throughout and less and less of life remains throughout.

And since the mind is one part of a man which remains fixed in a particular spot, just as are the ears and eyes and the other senses which guide and direct life; and just as the hand or eye or nose when separated from us cannot feel and exist apart, but in however short a time wastes away in putrefaction, thus the mind cannot exist by itself without the body and the man's self which as you see serves for the mind's vessel or any thing else you choose to imagine

which implies a yet closer union with it, since the body is attached to it by the nearest ties.

Again the quickened powers of body and mind by their joint partnership enjoy health and life; for the nature of the mind cannot by itself alone without the body give forth vital motions nor can the body again bereft of the soul continue to exist and make use of its senses: just, you are to know, as the eye, itself torn away from its roots, cannot see anything when apart from the whole body, thus the soul and, mind cannot, it is plain, do anything by themselves.

Sure enough, because mixed up through veins and flesh, sinews and bones, their first-beginnings are confined by all the body and are not free to bound away leaving great spaces between, therefore thus shut in they make those sense-giving motions which they cannot make after death when forced out of the body into the air by reason that they are not then confined in a like manner; [572] for the air will be a body and a living thing if the soul shall be able to keep itself together and to enclose in it those motions which it used before to perform in the sinews and within the body.

Moreover, even while it yet moves within the confines of life, often the soul shaken from some cause or other is seen to wish to pass out and be loosed from the whole body, the features are seen to droop as at the last hour and all the limbs to sink flaccid over the bloodless trunk: just as happens, when the phrase is used, the mind is in a bad way, or the soul is quite gone; when all is hurry and everyone is anxious to keep from parting the last tie of life; for then the mind and the power of the soul are shaken throughout and both are quite loosened together with the body; so that a cause somewhat more powerful can quite break them up.

Why doubt, I would ask, that the soul when driven forth out of the body, when in the open air, feeble as it is, stripped of its covering, not only cannot continue through eternity, but is unable to hold together the smallest fraction of time?

Therefore, again and again I say, when the enveloping body has been all broken up and the vital airs have been forced out, you must admit that the senses of the mind and the soul are dissolved, since the cause of destruction is one and inseparable for both body and soul.

Again since the body is unable to bear the separation of the soul without rotting away in a noisome stench, why doubt that the power of the soul gathering itself up from the inmost depths of body has oozed out and dispersed like smoke, and that the crumbling body has changed and tumbled in with so total a ruin for this reason because its foundations throughout are stirred from their places, the soul oozing out abroad through the frame, through all the winding passages which are in the body, and all openings?

So that in ways manifold you may learn that the nature of the soul has been divided piecemeal and gone forth throughout the frame, and that it has been torn to shreds within the body, ere it glided forth and swam out into the air.

For no one when dying appears to feel the soul go forth entire from his

whole body or first mount up to the throat and gullet, but all feel it fail in that part which lies in a particular quarter; [610] just as they know that the senses as well suffer dissolution each in its own place.

But if our mind were immortal, it would not when dying complain so much of its dissolution, as of passing abroad and quitting its vesture, like a snake.

Again, why are the mind's understanding and judgment never begotten in the head or feet or hands, but cling in all alike to one spot and fixed quarter, if it be not that particular places are assigned for the birth of everything, and [nature has determined] where each is to continue to exist after it is born?

[Our body then must follow the same law] and have such a manifold organization of parts, that no perverted arrangement of its members shall ever show itself.

So invariably effect follows cause, nor is flame wont to be born in rivers nor cold in fire.

Again, if the nature of the soul is immortal and can feel when separated from our body, methinks we must suppose it to be provided with five senses; and in no other way can we picture to ourselves souls below flitting about Acheron.

Painters therefore and former generations of writers have thus represented souls provided with senses.

But neither eyes nor nose nor hand can exist for the soul apart from the body, nor can tongue, nor can ears perceive by the sense of hearing or exist for the soul by themselves apart from the body.

And since we perceive that vital sense is in the whole body and we see that it is all endowed with life, if on a sudden any force with swift blow shall have cut it in twain so as quite to dis sever the two halves, the power of the soul will without doubt at the same time be cleft and cut asunder and dashed in twain together with the body.

But that which is cut and divides into any parts, you are to know disclaims for itself an everlasting nature.

Stories are told how scythed chariots reeking with indiscriminate slaughter often lop off limbs so instantaneously that that which has fallen down lopped off from the frame is seen to quiver on the ground, while yet the mind and faculty of the man from the suddenness of the mischief cannot feel the pain; and because his mind once for all is wholly given to the business of fighting, with what remains of his body he mingles in the fray and carnage, and often perceives not that the wheels and devouring scythes have carried off among the horses' feet his left arm shield and all; [650] another sees not that his right arm has dropped from him, while he mounts and presses forward.

Another tries to get up after he has lost his leg, while the dying foot quivers with its toes on the ground close by.

The head too when cut off from the warm and living trunk retains on the ground the expression of life and open eyes, until it has yielded up all the remnants of soul.

To take another case, if, as a serpent's tongue is quivering, as its tail is darting out from its long body, you choose to chop with an axe into many pieces both [tail and body], you will see all the separate portions thus cut off writhing under the fresh wound and bespattering the earth with gore, the fore part with the mouth making for its own hinder part, to allay with burning bite the pain of the wound with which it has been smitten.

Shall we say then that there are entire souls in all those pieces? Why from that argument it will follow that one living creature had many souls in its body; and this being absurd, therefore the soul which was one has been divided together with the body; therefore each alike must be reckoned mortal, since each is alike chopped up into many pieces.

Again, if the nature of the soul is immortal and makes its way into our body at the time of birth, why are we unable to remember besides the time already gone, and why do we retain no traces of past actions? If the power of the mind has been so completely changed that all remembrance of past things is lost, that methinks differs not widely from death; therefore you must admit that the soul which was before has perished and that which now is has now been formed.

Again if the quickened power of the mind is wont to be put into us after our body is fully formed, at the instant of our birth and our crossing the threshold of life, it ought agreeably to this to live not in such a way as to seem to have grown with the body and together with its members within the blood, but as in a den apart by and to itself: the very contrary to what undoubted fact teaches; for it is so closely united with the body throughout the veins, flesh, sinews, and bones, that the very teeth have a share of sense; as their aching proves and the sharp twinge of cold water and the crunching of a rough stone when it has got into them out of bread.

Wherefore, again and again I say, we must believe souls to be neither without a birth nor exempted from the law of death; [692] for we must not believe that they could have been so completely united with our bodies, if they found their way into them from without, nor since they are so closely interwoven with them, does it appear that they can get out unharmed and unloose themselves unscathed from all the sinews and bones and joints.

But if haply you believe that the soul finds its way in from without and is wont to ooze through all our limbs, so much the more it will perish thus blended with the body; for what oozes through another is dissolved, and therefore dies.

As food distributed throughout the cavities of the body, while it is transmitted into the limbs and the whole frame, is destroyed and furnishes out of itself the matter of another nature, thus the soul and mind, though they pass entire into a fresh body, yet in oozing through it are dissolved, whilst there are transmitted, so to say, into the frame through all the cavities those particles of which this nature of mind is formed, which now is sovereign in our body, being born out of that soul which then perished when dispersed through the

frame.

Wherefore the nature of the soul is seen to be neither without a birthday nor exempt from death.

Again, are seeds of the soul left in the dead body or not?

If they are left and remain in it, the soul cannot fairly be deemed immortal, since it has withdrawn lessened by the loss of some parts; but if when taken away from the yet untainted limbs it has fled so entirely away as to leave in the body no parts of itself, whence do carcasses exude worms from the now rank flesh and whence does such a swarm of living things, boneless and bloodless, surge through the heaving frame?

But if haply you believe that souls find their way into worms from without and can severally pass each into a body and you make no account of why many thousands of souls meet together in a place from which one has withdrawn, this question at least must, it seems, be raised and brought to a decisive test, whether souls hunt out the several seeds of worms and build for themselves a place to dwell in, or find their way into bodies fully formed so to say.

But why they should on their part make a body or take such trouble, cannot be explained; since being without a body they are not plagued as they flit about with diseases and cold and hunger, the body being more akin to, more troubled by such infirmities, and by its contact with it the mind suffering many ills.

[734] Nevertheless be it ever so expedient for them to make a body, when they are going to enter, yet clearly there is no way by which they can do so.

Therefore souls do not make for themselves bodies and limbs; no: nor can they by any method find their way into bodies after they are full formed; for they will neither be able to unite themselves with a nice precision nor will any connection of mutual sensation be formed between them.

Again, why does untamed fierceness go along with the sullen brood of lions, cunning with foxes and proneness to flight with stags?

And to take any other instance of the kind, why are all qualities engendered in the limbs and temper from the very commencement of life, if not because a fixed power of mind derived from its proper seed and breed grows up together with the whole body? If it were immortal and wont to pass into different bodies, living creatures would be of interchangeable dispositions; a dog of Hyrcanian breed would often fly before the attack of an antlered stag, a hawk would cower in mid air as it fled at the approach of a dove, men would be without reason, the savage races of wild beasts would have reason.

For the assertion that an immortal soul is altered by a change of body is advanced on a false principle.

What is changed is dissolved, and therefore dies: the parts are transposed and quit their former order; therefore they must admit of being dissolved too throughout the frame, in order at last to die one and all together with the body.

But if they shall say that souls of men always go into human bodies, I yet

will ask how it is a soul can change from wise to foolish, and no child has discretion, and why the mare's foal is not so well trained as the powerful strength of the horse.

You may be sure they will fly to the subterfuge that the mind grows weakly in a weakly body.

But granting this is so, you must admit the soul to be mortal, since changed so completely throughout the frame it loses its former life and sense.

Then too in what way will it be able to grow in strength uniformly with its allotted body and reach the coveted flower of age, unless it shall be its partner at its first beginning?

Or what means it by passing out from the limbs when decayed with age?

Does it fear to remain shut up in a crumbling body, fear that its tenement, worn out by protracted length of days, bury it in its ruins?

[775] Why, an immortal being incurs no risks.

Again for souls to stand by at the unions of Venus and the birth-throes of beasts seems to be passing absurd, for them the immortals to wait for mortal limbs in number numberless and struggle with one another in forward rivalry, which shall first and by preference have entrance in; unless haply bargains are struck among the souls on these terms, that whichever in its flight shall first come up, shall first have right of entry, and that they shall make no trial at all of each other's strength.

Again a tree cannot exist in the ether, nor clouds in the deep sea nor can fishes live in the fields nor blood exist in woods nor sap in stones.

Where each thing can grow and abide is fixed and ordained.

Thus the nature of the mind cannot come into being alone without the body nor exist far away from the sinews and blood.

But if (for this would be much more likely to happen than that) the force itself of the mind might be in the head or shoulders or heels or might be born in any other part of the body, it would after all be wont to abide in one and the same man or vessel.

But since in our body even it is fixed and seen to be ordained where the soul and the mind can severally be and grow, it must still more strenuously be denied that it can abide and be born out of the body altogether.

Therefore when the body has died, we must admit that the soul has perished, wrenched away throughout the body.

To link forsooth a mortal thing with an everlasting and suppose that they can have sense in common and can be reciprocally acted upon, is sheer folly; for what can be conceived more incongruous, more discordant and inconsistent with itself, than a thing which is mortal, linked with an immortal and everlasting thing, trying in such union to weather furious storms?

But if haply the soul is to be accounted immortal for this reason rather, because it is kept sheltered from death-bringing things, either because things hostile to its existence do not approach at all, or because those which do approach, in some way or other retreat discomfited before we can feel the

harm they do, [manifest experience proves that this can not be true].

For besides that it sickens in sympathy with the maladies of the body, it is often attacked by that which frets it on the score of the future and keeps it on the rack of suspense and wears it out with cares; [827] and when ill deeds are in the past, remorse for sins yet gnaws: then there is madness peculiar to the mind and forgetfulness of all things; then too it often sinks into the black waters of lethargy.

Death therefore to us is nothing, concerns us not a jot, since the nature of the mind is proved to be mortal; and as in time gone by we felt no distress when the Poeni from all sides came together to do battle, and all things shaken by war's troublous uproar shuddered and quaked beneath high heaven, and mortal men were in doubt which of the two peoples it should be to whose empire all must fall by sea and land alike, thus when we shall be no more, when there shall have been a separation of body and soul, out of both of which we are each formed into a single being, to us, you may be sure, who then shall be no more, nothing whatever can happen to excite sensation, not if earth shall be mingled with sea and sea with heaven.

And even supposing the nature of the mind and power of the soul do feel, after they have been severed from our body, yet that is nothing to us who by the binding tie of marriage between body and soul are formed each into one single being.

And if time should gather up our matter after our death and put it once more into the position in which it now is, and the light of life be given to us again, this result even would concern us not at all, when the chain of our self-consciousness has once been snapped asunder.

So now we give ourselves no concern about any self which we have been before, nor do we feel any distress on the score of that self.

For when you look back on the whole past course of immeasurable time and think how manifold are the shapes which the motions of matter take, you may easily credit this too, that these very same seeds of which we now are formed, have often before been placed in the same order in which they now are; and yet we cannot recover this in memory: a break in our existence has been interposed, and all the motions have wandered to and fro far astray from the sensations they produced.

For he whom evil is to befall must in his own person exist at the very time it comes, if the misery and suffering are haply to have any place at all; but since death precludes this, and forbids him to be, upon whom the ills can be brought, you may be sure that we have nothing to fear after death, and that he who exists not, cannot become miserable, and that it matters not a whit whether he has been born into life at any other time, when immortal death has taken away his mortal life.

[870] Therefore when you see a man bemoaning his hard case, that after death he shall either rot with his body laid in the grave or be devoured by flames or the jaws of wild beasts, you may be sure that his ring betrays a flaw

and that there lurks in his heart a secret goad, though he himself declare that he does not believe that any sense will remain to him after death.

He does not methinks really grant the conclusion which he professes to grant nor the principle on which he so professes, nor does he take and force himself root and branch out of life, but all unconsciously imagines something of self to survive.

For when any one in life suggests to himself that birds and beasts will rend his body after death, he makes moan for himself: he does not separate himself from that self, nor withdraw himself fully from the body so thrown out, and fancies himself that other self and stands by and impregnates it with his own sense.

Hence he makes much moan that he has been born mortal, and sees not that after real death there will be no other self to remain in life and lament to self that his own self has met death, and there to stand and grieve that his own self there lying is mangled or burnt.

For if it is an evil after death to be pulled about by the devouring jaws of wild beasts, I cannot see why it should not be a cruel pain to be laid on fires and burn in hot flames, or to be placed in honey and stifled, or to stiffen with cold, stretched on the smooth surface of an icy slab of stone, or to be pressed down and crushed by a load of earth above.

“Now no more shall thy house admit thee with glad welcome, nor a most virtuous wife and sweet children run to be the first to snatch kisses and touch thy heart with a silent joy. No more may thou be prosperous in thy doings, a safeguard to thine own. One disastrous day has taken from thee luckless man luckless wise all the many prizes of life.”

This do men say, but add not thereto “and now no longer does any craving for these things beset thee withal.”

For if they could rightly perceive this in thought and follow up the thought in words, they would release themselves from great distress and apprehension of mind.

[904] “Thou, even as now thou art, sunk in the sleep of death, shalt continue so to be all time to come, freed from all distressful pains; but we with a sorrow that would not be sated wept for thee, when close by thou didst turn to an ashen hue on thy appalling funeral pile, and no length of days shall pluck from our hearts our ever-during grief?”

This question therefore should be asked of this speaker, what there is in it so passing bitter, if it come in the end to sleep and rest, that any one should pine in never-ending sorrow.

This too men often, when they have reclined at table, cup in hand and shade their brows with crowns, love to say from the heart, “Short is this enjoyment for poor weak men; presently it will have been and never after may it be called back!”

As if after their death it is to be one of their chiefest afflictions that thirst and parching drought is to burn them up, hapless wretches, or a craving for

any thing else is to beset them.

What folly! No one feels the want of himself and life at the time when mind and body are together sunk in sleep; for all we care this sleep might be everlasting, no craving whatever for ourselves then moves us.

And yet by no means do those first-beginnings throughout our frame wander at that time far away from their sense-producing motions, at the moment when a man starts up from sleep and collects himself.

Death therefore must be thought to concern us much less, if less there can be than what we see to be nothing; for a greater dispersion of the mass of matter follows after death, and no one wakes up, upon whom the chill cessation of life has once come.

Once more, if the nature of things could suddenly utter a voice and in person could rally any of us in such words as these:

“What hast thou: o mortal, so much at heart, that thou goest such lengths in sickly sorrows? Why bemoan and bewail death? For say thy life past and gone has been welcome to thee and thy blessings have not all, as if they were poured into a perforated vessel, run through and been lost without avail? Why not then take thy departure like a guest filled with life, and with resignation, thou fool, enter upon untroubled rest? But if all that thou hast enjoyed has been squandered and lost, and life is a grievance, why seek to make any addition, to be wasted perversely in its turn and lost utterly without avail? Why not rather make an end of life and travail? ^[944] For there is nothing more which I can contrive and discover for thee to give pleasure: all things are ever the same. Though thy body is not yet decayed with years nor thy frame worn out and exhausted, yet all things remain the same, ay though in length of life thou shouldst outlast all races of things now living, nay even more if thou shouldst never die.”

What answer have we to make save this, that nature sets up against us a well-founded claim and puts forth in her pleading a true indictment?

If however one of greater age and more advanced in years should complain and lament, poor wretch, his death more than is right, would she not with greater cause raise her voice and rally him in sharp accents,

“Away from this time forth with thy tears, rascal; a truce to thy complaining: thou decayest after full enjoyment of all the prizes of life. But because thou ever yearnest for what is not present, and despisest what is, life has slipped from thy grasp unfinished and unsatisfying, and or ever thou thoughtest, death has taken his stand at thy pillow, before thou canst take thy departure sated and filled with good things. Now however resign all things unsuited to thy age, and with a good grace up and greatly go: thou must.”

With good reason methinks she would bring her charge, with reason rally and reproach; for old things give way and are supplanted by new without fail, and one thing must ever be replenished out of other things; and no one is delivered over to the pit and black Tartarus.

Matter is needed for after generations to grow; all of which though will

follow thee when they have finished their term of life; and thus it is that all these no less than thou have before this come to an end and hereafter will come to an end.

Thus one thing will never cease to rise out of another, life is granted to none in fee-simple, to all in usufruct.

Think, too, how the bygone antiquity of everlasting time before our birth was nothing to us.

Nature therefore holds this up to us as a mirror of the time yet to come after our death.

Is there aught in this that looks appalling, aught that wears an aspect of gloom?

Is it not more untroubled than any sleep?

And those things sure enough, which are fabled to be in the deep of Acheron, do all exist for us in this life.

No Tantalus, numbed by groundless terror, as the story is, fears, poor wretch, a huge stone hanging in air; [981] but in life rather a baseless dread of the gods vexes mortals: the fall they fear is such fall of luck as chance brings to each.

Nor do birds eat away into Tityos laid in Acheron, nor can they, sooth to say, find during eternity food to peck under his large breast.

However huge the bulk of body he extends, though such as to take up with outspread limbs not nine acres merely, but the whole earth, yet will he not be able to endure everlasting pain and supply food from his own body for ever.

But he is for us a Tityos whom, as he grovels in love, vultures rend and bitter bitter anguish eats up or troubled thoughts from any other passion do rive.

In life, too, we have a Sisyphus before our eyes who is bent on asking from the people the rods and cruel axes, and always retires defeated and disappointed.

For to ask for power, which empty as it is, is never given, and always in the chase of it to undergo severe toil, this is forcing uphill with much effort a stone which after all rolls back again from the summit and seeks in headlong haste the levels of the plain.

Then to be ever feeding the thankless nature of the mind, and never to fill it full and sate it with good things, as the seasons of the year do for us, when they come round and bring their fruits and varied delights, though after all we are never filled with the enjoyments of life, this methinks is to do what is told of the maidens in the flower of their age, to keep pouring water into a perforated vessel which in spite of all can never be filled full.

Moreover, Cerberus and the furies and yon privation of light [are idle tales, as well as all the rest, Ixion's wheel and black] Tartarus belching forth hideous fires from his throat: things which nowhere are nor, sooth to say, can be.

But there is in life a dread of punishment for evil deeds, signal as the deeds

are signal, and for atonement of guilt, the prison and the frightful hurling down from the rock, scourgings, executioners, the dungeon of the doomed, the pitch, the metal plate, torches; and even though these are wanting, yet the conscience-stricken mind through boding fears applies to itself goads and frightens itself with whips, and sees not meanwhile what end there can be of ills or what limit at last is to be set to punishments, and fears lest these very evils be enhanced after death.

The life of fools at length becomes a hell here on earth.

[1024] This too you may sometimes say to yourself, "Even worthy Ancus has quitted the light with his eyes, who was far far better than thou, unconscionable man."

And since then many other king and kesars have been laid low, who lorded it over mighty nations.

He too, even he who erst paved a way over the great sea and made a path for his legions to march over the deep and taught them to pass on foot over the salt pools and set at naught the roarings of the sea, trampling on them with his horses, had the light taken from him and shed forth his soul from his dying body.

The son of the Scipios, thunderbolt of war, terror of Carthage, yielded his bones to earth just as if he were the lowest menial.

Think, too, of the inventors of all sciences and graceful arts, think of the companions of the Heliconian maids; among whom Homer bore the scepter without a peer, and he now sleeps the same sleep as others.

Then there is Democritus who, when a ripe old age had warned him that the memory-waking motions of his mind were waning, by his own spontaneous act offered up his head to death.

Even Epicurus passed away when his light of life had run its course, he who surpassed in intellect the race of man and quenched the light of all, as the ethereal sun arisen quenches the stars.

Wilt thou then hesitate and think it a hardship to die? Thou for whom life is well nigh dead whilst yet thou livest and seest the light, who spendest the greater part of thy time in sleep and snoorest wide awake and ceasest not to see visions and hast a mind troubled with groundless terror and canst not discover often what it is that ails thee, when besotted man thou art sore pressed on all sides with full many cares and goest astray tumbling about in the wayward wanderings of thy mind.

If, just as they are seen to feel that a load is on their mind which wears them out with its pressure, men might apprehend from what causes too it is produced and whence such a pile, if I may say so, of ill lies on their breast, they would not spend their life as we see them now for the most part do, not knowing any one of them what he means and wanting ever change of place as though he might lay his burden down.

The man who is sick of home often issues forth from his large mansion, and as suddenly comes back to it, finding as he does that he is no better off

abroad.

He races to his country-house, driving his jennets in headlong haste, as if hurrying to bring help to a house on fire: ^[1064] he yawns the moment he has reached the door of his house, or sinks heavily into sleep and seeks forgetfulness, or even in haste goes back again to town.

In this way each man flies from himself, (but self from whom, as you may be sure is commonly the case, he cannot escape, clings to him in his own despite) hates too himself, because he is sick and knows not the cause of the malady.

For if he could rightly see into this, relinquishing all else, each man would study to learn the nature of things, since the point at stake is the condition for eternity, not for one hour, in which mortals have to pass all the time which remains for them to expect after death.

Once more, what evil lust of life is this which constrains us with such force to be so mightily troubled in doubts and dangers?

A sure term of life, is fixed for mortals, and death cannot be shunned, but meet it we must.

Moreover, we are ever engaged, ever involved in the same pursuits, and no new pleasure is struck out by living on; but whilst what we crave is wanting, it seems to transcend all the rest; then, when it has been gotten, we crave something else, and ever does the same thirst of life possess us, as we gape for it open-mouthed.

Quite doubtful it is what fortune the future will carry with it or what chance will bring us or what end is at hand.

Nor by prolonging life do we take one tittle from the time past in death nor can we fret anything away, whereby we may haply be a less long time in the condition of the dead.

Therefore you may complete as many generations as you please during your life; none the less however will that everlasting death await you; and for no less long a time will he be no more in being, who beginning with today has ended his life, than the man who has died many months and years ago.

BOOK IV.

[1] I TRAVERSE the pathless haunts of the Pierides never yet trodden by sole of man.

I love to approach the untasted springs and to quaff; I love to cull fresh flowers and gather for my head a distinguished crown from spots whence the muses have yet veiled the brows of none; first because I teach of great things and essay to release the mind from the fast bonds of religious scruples, and next because on a dark subject I pen such lucid verses, overlaying all with the muses' charm.

For that too would seem to be not without good grounds: even as physicians when they propose to give nauseous wormwood to children, first smear the rim round the bowl with the sweet yellow juice of honey, that the unthinking age of children may be fooled as far as the lips, and meanwhile drink up the bitter draught of wormwood and though beguiled yet not be betrayed, but rather by such means recover health and strength: so now, since this doctrine seems generally somewhat bitter to those by whom it has not been handled, and the multitude shrinks back from it in dismay, have resolved to set forth to you our doctrine in sweet-toned Pierian verse and overlay it, as it were, with the pleasant honey of the muses, if haply by such means I might engage your mind on my verses, till such time as you apprehend all the nature of things and thoroughly feel what use it has.

And now that I have taught what the nature of the mind is and out of what things it is formed into one quickened being with the body, and how it is dissevered and returns into its first-beginnings, I will attempt to lay before you a truth which most nearly concerns these questions, the existence of things which we call idols of things: [30] these, like films peeled from the surface of things, fly to and fro through the air, and do likewise frighten our minds when they present themselves to us awake as well as in sleep, what time we behold strange shapes and idols of the light-bereaved, which have often startled us in appalling wise as we lay relaxed in sleep: this I will essay, that we may not haply believe that souls break loose from Acheron or that shades fly about among the living or that something of us is left behind after death, when the body and the nature of the mind destroyed together have taken their departure into their several first-beginnings.

I say then that pictures of things and thin shapes are emitted from things off their surface, to which an image serves as a kind of film, or name it if you like a rind, because such image bears an appearance and form like to the thing whatever it is from whose body it is shed and wanders forth.

This you may learn, however dull of apprehension, from what follows.

First of all, since among things open to sight many emit bodies, some in a state of loose diffusion, like smoke which logs of oak, heat which fires emit; some of a closer and denser texture, like the gossamer coats which at times

cicades doff in summer, and the films which calves at their birth cast from the surface of their body, as well as the vesture which the slippery serpent puts off among the thorns; for often we see the brambles enriched with their flying spoils: since these cases occur, a thin image likewise must be emitted from things off their surface.

For why those films should drop off and withdraw from things rather than films which are really thin, not one tittle of proof can be given; especially since there are on the surface of things many minute bodies which maybe discharged in the same order they had before and preserve the outline of the shape, and be discharged with far more velocity, inasmuch as they are less liable to get hampered being few in number and stationed in the front rank.

For without doubt we see many things discharge and freely give not only from the core and center, as we said before, but from their surfaces, besides other things, color itself.

And this is commonly done by yellow and red and dark blue awnings, when they are spread over large theaters and flutter and wave as they stretch across their poles and crossbeams; [78] for then they dye the seated assemblage below and all the show of the stage and the richly attired company of the fathers, and compel them to dance about in their color.

And the more these objects are shut in all round by the walls of the theater the more do all of them within laugh on all hands, overlaid with graceful hues, the light of day being narrowed.

Therefore since sheets of canvass emit color from their surface, all things will naturally emit thin pictures too, since in each case alike they discharge from the surface.

There are therefore as now shown sure outlines of shapes, which fly all about possessed of an exquisitely small thickness and cannot when separate be seen one at a time.

Again, all smell, smoke, heat, and other such-like things stream off things in a state of diffusion, because while they are coming from the depths of the body having arisen within it, they are torn in their winding passage, and there are no straight orifices to the paths, for them to make their way out by in a mass.

But on the other hand, when a thin film of surface color is discharged, there is nothing to rend it, since it is ready to hand, stationed in front rank.

Lastly, in the case of all idols which show themselves to us in mirrors, in water or any other shining object, since their outsides are possessed of an appearance like to the things they represent, they must be formed of emitted images of things.

There are therefore thin shapes and pictures like to the things, which, though no one can see them one at a time, yet when thrown off by constant and repeated reflection give back a visible image from the surface of mirrors; and in no other way it would seem can they be kept so entire that shapes are given back so exceedingly like each object.

Now mark, and learn how thin in the nature of an image is.

And first of all, since first-beginnings are so far below the ken of our senses and much smaller than the things which our eyes first begin to be unable to see, to strengthen yet more the proof of this also, learn in a few words how minutely fine are the beginnings of all things.

First, living things are in some cases so very little, that their third part cannot be seen at all.

Of what size are we to suppose any gut of such creatures to be? Or the ball of the heart or the eyes? The limbs? Or any part of the frame? How small they must be!

And then further, the several first-beginnings of which their soul and the nature of their mind must be formed? ^[122] Do you not perceive how fine, how minute they are?

Again in the case of all things which exhale from their body a pungent smell, all-heal, nauseous wormwood, strong scented southernwood and the bitter centauries, any one of which, if you happen to [feel it] lightly between two [fingers, will impregnate them with a strong smell] but rather you are to know that idols of things wander about many in number in many ways, of no force, powerless to excite sense.

But lest haply you suppose that only those idols of things which go off from things and no others wander about, there are likewise those which are spontaneously begotten and are formed by themselves in this lower heaven which is called air: these fashioned in many ways are borne along on high and being in a fluid state cease not to alter their appearance and change it into the outline of shapes of every possible kind; as we see clouds sometimes gather into masses on high and blot the calm clear face of heaven, fanning the air with their motion.

Thus often the faces of giants are seen to fly along and draw after them a far-spreading shadow; sometimes great mountains and rocks torn from the mountains are seen to go in advance and pass across the sun; and then some huge beast is observed to draw with it and bring on the other storm clouds.

Now [I will proceed to show] with what ease and celerity they are begotten and how incessantly they flow and fall away from things.

The outermost surface is ever streaming off from things and admits of being discharged: when this reaches some things, it passes through them, glass especially.

But when it reaches rough stones or the matter of wood, it is then so torn that it cannot give back any idol.

But when objects at once shining and dense have been put in its way, a mirror especially, none of these results has place: it can neither pass through it, like glass, nor can it be torn either; such perfect safety the polished surface minds to ensure.

In consequence of this idols stream back to us from such objects; and however suddenly at any moment you place anything opposite a mirror, an

image shows itself: hence you may be sure that thin textures and thin shapes of things incessantly stream from their surface.

Therefore many idols are begotten in a short time, so that the birth of such things is with good reason named a rapid one.

And as the sun must send forth many rays of light in a short time in order that all things may be continually filled with it, so also for alike reason there must be carried away from things in a moment of time idols of things many in number in many ways in all directions round; [165] since to whatever part of them we present a mirror before their surfaces, other things correspond to these in the mirror of a like shape and like color.

Moreover, though the state of heaven has just before been of unsullied purity, with exceeding suddenness it becomes so hideously overcast, that you might imagine all its darkness had abandoned Acheron throughout and filled up the great vaults of heaven: in such numbers do faces of black horror rise up from amid the frightful night of storm clouds and hang over us on high.

Now there is no one who can tell how small a fraction of these an image is, or express that sum in language.

Now mark: how swift the motion is with which idols are borne along, and what velocity is assigned to them as they glide through the air, so that but a short hour is spent on a journey through long space, whatever the spot towards which they go with a movement of varied tendency, all this I will tell in sweetly worded rather than in many verses; as the short song of the swan is better than the loud noise of cranes scattered abroad amid the ethereal clouds of the south.

First of all we may very often observe that things which are light and made of minute bodies are swift.

Of this kind are the light of the sun and its heat, because they are made of minute first things which are knocked forward so to speak and do not hesitate to pass through the space of air between, ever driven on by a blow following behind; for light on the instant is supplied by fresh light and brightness goaded to show its brightness in what you might call an ever on-moving team.

Therefore in like manner idols must be able to scour in a moment of time through space unspeakable, first because they are exceeding small and there is a cause at their back to carry and impel them far forward; where moreover they move on with such winged lightness; next because when emitted they are possessed of so rare a texture, that they can readily pass through any things and stream as it were through the space of air between.

Again, if those minute bodies of things which are given out from the inmost depths of these things, as the light and heat of the sun, are seen in a moment of time to glide and spread themselves through the length and breadth of heaven, fly over sea and lands and flood the heaven, what then of those which stand ready posted in front rank, when they are discharged and nothing obstructs their egress?

[206] How much faster, you see, and farther must they travel, scouring

through many times the same amount of space in the same time that the sunlight takes to spread over heaven !

This too appears to be an eminently true proof of the velocity with which idols of things are borne along: as soon as ever the brightness of water is set down in the open air, if the heaven is starry, in a moment the clear radiant constellations of ether imaged in the water correspond to those in the heaven.

Now do you see in what a moment of time an image drops down from the borders of heaven to the borders of earth? Therefore, again and again I repeat you must admit that bodies capable of striking the eyes and of provoking vision [constantly travel] with a marvelous [velocity].

Smells too incessantly stream from certain things; as does cold from rivers, heat from the sun, spray from the waves of the sea, that enter into walls near the shore.

Various sounds also cease not to fly through the air.

Then too a moist salt flavor often comes into the mouth, when we are moving about beside the sea; and when we look on at the mixing of a decoction of wormwood, its bitterness affects us.

In such a constant stream from all things the several qualities are carried and are transmitted in all directions round, and no delay, no respite in the flow is ever granted, since we constantly have feeling, and may at any time see smell and hear the sound of anything.

Again since a particular figure felt by the hands in the dark is known to be the same which is seen in the bright light of day, touch and sight must be excited by a quite similar cause.

Well then if we handle a square thing and it excites our attention in the dark, in the daylight what square thing will be able to fall on our sight, except the image of that thing? Therefore the cause of it is plain lies in images and no thing can be perceived without them.

Well, the idols of things I speak of are borne along all round and are discharged and transmitted in all directions; but because we can see with the eyes alone, the consequence is that, to whatever point we turn our sight, there all the several things meet and strike it with their shape and color.

[243] And the image gives the power to see and the means to distinguish how far each thing is distant from us; for as soon as ever it is discharged, it pushes before it and impels all the air which lies between it and the eyes; and thus that air all streams through our eyes and brushes so to say the pupils and so passes through.

The consequence is that we see how far distant each thing is.

And the greater the quantity of air which is driven on before it and the larger the current which brushes our eyes, the more distant each different thing is seen to be.

You must know these processes go on with extreme rapidity, so that at one and the same moment we see what like a thing is and how far distant it is.

And this must by no means be deemed strange herein that, while the idols

which strike the eyes cannot be seen one at a time, the things themselves are seen.

For thus when the wind too beats us with successive strokes and when piercing cold streams, we are not wont to feel each single particle of that wind and cold, but rather the whole result; and then we perceive blows take effect on our body just as if something or other were beating it and giving us a sensation of its body outside.

Again when we thump a stone with a finger, we touch merely the outermost color on the surface of the stone, and yet we do not feel that color by our touch, but rather we feel the very hardness of the stone seated in its inmost depths.

Now mark, and learn why the image is seen beyond the mirror; for without doubt it is seen withdrawn far within.

The case is just the same as with things which are viewed in their reality beyond a door, when it offers through it an unobstructed prospect and lets many things outside be seen from a house.

That vision too is effected by two separate airs: first there is an air seen in such a case inside the doorway; next come the leaves of the door right and left; next a light outside brushes the eyes, then a second air, then those things outside which are viewed in their reality.

Thus when the image of the mirror has first discharged itself, in coming to our sight it pushes forward and impels all the air which lies between it and the eyes, and enables us to see the whole of it before the mirror.

But when we have perceived the mirror as well, at once the image which is conveyed from us reaches the mirror and then is reflected and comes back to our eyes, and drives on and rolls in front of it a second air and lets us see this before itself, and for this reason it looks so far withdrawn from the mirror.

[288] Wherefore again and again I repeat there is no cause at all to wonder why the images give back the reflection from the surface of mirrors in the spot they do, since in both the given cases the result is produced by two airs.

To proceed, the right side of our body is seen in mirrors to be on the left, because when the image comes and strikes on the plane of the mirror, it is not turned back unaltered, but is beaten out in a right line backwards, just as if you were to take a plaster mask before it is dry and dash it on a pillar or beam, and it forthwith were to preserve the lines of its features undistorted in front and were to strike out an exact copy of itself straight backwards.

The result will be that the eye which was right will now be left; and conversely the left become the right.

An image may also be so transmitted from one mirror to another that five or six idols are often produced.

And thus all the things which lurk in the inmost corners of a house, however far they are withdrawn into tortuous recesses, may yet be all brought out through winding passages by the aid of a number of mirrors and be seen to be in the house.

So unfailingly does the image reflect itself from mirror to mirror; and when the left side is presented, it becomes the right in the new image; then it is changed back again and turns round to what it was.

Moreover all little sides of mirrors which possess a curvature resembling our side, send back to us idols with their right corresponding to our right either for this reason, because the image is transmitted from one mirror to another, and then after it has been twice struck out flies to us, or else because the image, when it has come to the mirror, wheels about, because the curved shape of the mirror teaches it to turn round and face us.

Again you would think that idols step out and put down their foot at the same time with us and mimic our action, because from before whatever part of a mirror you move away, from that part forthwith no idols can be reflected; since nature constrains all things, when they are carried back and recoil from things, to be given back at angles equal to those at which they impinged.

Bright things again the eyes eschew and shun to look upon: the sun even blinds them, if you persist in turning them towards it, because its power is great and idols are borne through the clear air with great downward force from on high, and strike the eyes, and disorder their fastenings.

[327] Moreover any vivid brightness often bums the eyes, because it contains many seeds of fire which make a way in and beget pain in the eyes.

Again whatever the jaundiced look at becomes a greenish-yellow, because many seeds of greenish-yellow stream from their body and meet the idols of things, and many too are mixed up in their eyes, and these by their infection tinge all things with sallow hues.

Again we see out of the dark things which are in the light for this reason: when the black air of darkness being the nearer has first entered and taken possession of the open eyes, the bright white air follows straightway after and cleanses them so to say and dispels the black shadows of the other air; for this is a great deal more nimble, a great deal more subtle and more efficacious.

As soon as it has filled with light and opened up the passages of the eyes which the black air had before blocked up, forthwith the idols of things which are situated in the light follow and excite them so that we see.

This we cannot do conversely in the dark out of the light, because the grosser air of darkness follows behind and quite fills all the openings and blocks up the passages of the eyes, not letting the idols of any things at all be thrown into the eyes to move them.

Again when we descry far off the square towers of a town, they often appear to be round for this reason: all the angles are seen from a distance to look obtuse, or rather are not seen at all, and their blow is lost and their stroke never makes its way to our sight, because while the idols are borne on through much air, the air by repeated collisions blunts the stroke perforce.

When in this way all the angles have together eluded the sense, the stone structures are rounded off as if by the lathe; yet they do not look like the things which are close before us and really round, but somewhat resembling

them as in shadowy outline.

Our shadow likewise seems to move in the sunshine and to follow our steps and mimic our action; if you think forsooth that air deprived of life can step, imitating the motions and the actions of men; for that which we are wont to term shadow can be nothing but air devoid of light.

Sure enough, because the earth in certain spots successively is deprived of light wherever we intercept it in moving about, while that part of it which we have quitted is filled with light, therefore that which was the shadow of our body, seems to have always followed us unchanged in a direct line with us.

[374] For new rays of light ever pour in and the old are lost, just as if wool were drawn into the fire.

Therefore the earth is readily stripped of light, and again filled, and cleanses itself from black shadows.

And yet in all this we do not admit that the eyes are cheated one whit, for it is their province to observe in what spot soever light and shade are; but whether the lights are still the same or not, and whether it is the same shadow which was in this spot that is now passing to that, or whether what we said a little before is not rather the fact, this the reason of the mind, and only it, has to determine; nor can the eyes know the nature of things.

Do not then fasten upon the eyes this frailty of the mind.

The ship in which we are sailing moves on while seeming to stand still; that one which remains at its moorings is believed to be passing by.

The hills and fields seem to be dropping astern, past which we are driving our ship and flying under sail.

The stars all seem to be at rest fast fixed to the ethereal vaults, and yet are all in constant motion, since they rise and then go back to their far-off places of setting after they have traversed the length of heaven with their bright bodies.

In like manner sun and moon seem to stay in one place, bodies which simple fact proves are carried on.

And though between mountains rising up afar off from amid the waters there opens out for fleets a free passage of wide extent, yet a single island seems to be formed out of them united into one.

When children have stopped turning round themselves, the halls appear to them to whirl about and the pillars to course round to such a degree, that they can scarce believe that the whole roof is not threatening to tumble down upon them.

Again when nature begins to raise on high the sun's beam ruddy with bickering fires and to lift it up above the mountains, those hills above which the sun then seems to you to be, as blazing close at hand he dyes them with his own fire, are distant from us scarce two thousand arrow-flights, yea often scarce five hundred casts of a javelin; and yet between them and the sun lie immense levels of sea, spread out below the huge borders of ether, and many thousands of lands are between, held by divers peoples and races of wild

beasts.

[414] Then a puddle of water not more than a finger-breadth deep, which stands between the stones in the streets, offers a prospect beneath the earth of a reach as vast, as that with which the high yawning maw of heaven opens out above the earth; so that you seem to discern clouds and see the bodies of birds far withdrawn into that wondrous sky beneath the earth.

Again when our stout horse has stuck in the middle of a river and we have looked down on the swift waters of the stream, some force seems to carry athwart the current the body of the horse which is standing still and to force it rapidly up the stream; and to whatever point we cast our eyes about, all things seem to be carried on and to be flowing in the same way as we are.

Again although a portico runs in parallel lines from one end to the other and stands supported by equal columns along its whole extent, yet when, from the top of it, it is seen in its entire length, it gradually forms the contracted top of a narrowing cone, until uniting roof with floor and all the right side with the left it has brought them together into the vanishing point of a cone.

To sailors on the sea the sun appears to rise out of the waters and in the waters to set and bury his light; just because they behold nothing but water and sky; that you may not lightly suppose the credit of the senses to be shaken on all hands.

Then to people unacquainted with the sea ships in harbor seem to be all askew and with poop fittings broken to be pressing up against the water.

For whatever part of the oars is raised above the saltwater is straight, and the rudders in their upper half are straight: the parts which are sunk below the water-level appear to be broken and bent round and to slope up and turn back towards the surface and to be so much twisted back as well nigh to float on the top of the water.

And when the winds carry the thinly scattered clouds across heaven in the night time, then do the glittering signs appear to glide athwart the rack and to be travelling on high in a direction quite different to their real course.

Then if our hand chance to be placed beneath one eye and press it below, through a certain sensation all things which we look at appear then to become double as we look; the light of lamps brilliant with flames to be double, double too the furniture through the whole house, double men's faces and men's bodies.

Again when sleep has chained down our limbs in sweet slumber and the whole body is sunk in profound repose, yet then we seem to ourselves to be awake and to be moving our limbs, and mid the thick darkness of night we think we see the sun and the daylight; [457] and though in a confined room, we seem to be passing to new climates seas rivers and mountains and to be crossing plains on foot and to hear noises, though the austere silence of night prevails all round, and to be uttering speech though quite silent.

Many are the other marvels of this sort we see, which all seek to shake as it were the credit of the senses: quite in vain, since the greatest part of these

cases cheats us on account of the mental suppositions which we add of ourselves, taking those things as seen which have not been seen by the senses.

For nothing is harder than to separate manifest facts from doubtful which straightway the mind adds on of itself.

Again if a man believe that nothing is known, he knows not whether this even can be known, since he admits he knows nothing.

I will therefore decline to argue the case against him who places himself with head where his feet should be.

And yet granting that he knows this, I would still put this question, since he has never yet seen any truth in things, whence he knows what knowing and not knowing severally are, and what it is that has produced the knowledge of the true and the false and what has proved the doubtful to differ from the certain.

You will find that from the senses first has proceeded the knowledge of the true and the false and that the senses cannot be refuted.

For that which is of itself to be able to refute things false by true things must from the nature of the case be proved to have the higher certainty.

Well then, what must fairly be accounted of higher certainty than sense?

Shall reason founded on false sense be able to contradict them, wholly founded as it is on the senses?

And if they are not true, then all reason as well is rendered false.

Or shall the ears be able to take the eyes to task, or the touch the ears? Again shall the taste call in question this touch, or the nostrils refute or the eyes controvert it? Not so, I guess; for each apart has its own distinct office, each its own power; and therefore we must perceive what is soft and cold or hot by one distinct faculty, by another perceive the different colors of things and thus see all objects which are conjoined with color.

Taste too has its faculty apart; smells spring from one source, sounds from another.

[496] It must follow therefore that any one sense cannot confute any other.

No nor can any sense take itself to task, since equal credit must be assigned to it at all times.

What therefore has at any time appeared true to each sense, is true.

And if reason shall be unable to explain away the cause why things which close at hand were square, at a distance looked round, it yet is better, if you are at a loss for the reason, to state erroneously the causes of each shape than to let slip from your grasp on any side things manifest and ruin the groundwork of belief and wrench up all the foundations on which rest life and existence.

For not only would all reason give way, life itself would at once fall to the ground, unless you choose to trust the senses and shun precipices and all things else of this sort that are to be avoided, and to pursue the opposite things.

All that host of words then be sure is quite unmeaning which has been

drawn out in array against the senses.

Once more, as in a building, if the rule first applied is wry, and the square is untrue and swerves from its straight lines, and if there is the slightest hitch in any part of the level, all the construction must be faulty, all must be wry, crooked, sloping, leaning forwards, leaning backwards, without symmetry, so that some parts seem ready to fall, others do fall, ruined all by the first erroneous measurements; so too all reason of things must needs prove to you distorted and false, which is founded on false senses.

And now to explain in what way the other senses do each perceive their several objects, is the nowise arduous task which is still left.

In the first place, all sound and voice is heard when they have made their way into the ears and have struck with their body the sense of hearing.

For voice too and sound you must admit to be bodily, since they are able to act upon the senses.

Again, voice often abrades the throat, and shouting in passing forth makes the windpipe more rough: when to wit the first-beginnings of voices have risen up in larger mass and commenced to pass abroad through their strait passage, you are to know the door of the mouth now crammed itself is abraded.

There is no doubt then that voices and words consist of bodily first beginnings, with the power to hurt; nor can you fail to know how much of body is taken away and how much is withdrawn from men's very sinews and strength by a speech continued without interruption from the dawning brightness of morning to the shadow of black night, above all if it has been poured forth with much loud shouting.

[540] Voice therefore must be bodily, since a man by much speaking loses a portion from his body.

Next roughness of voice comes from roughness of first-beginnings, as smoothness is produced from smoothness.

Nor are the first-beginnings of like shape which pierce the ears in these two cases: when the trumpet brays dully in deep low tones, the barbarian country roused echoing back the hoarse hollow sound, and when swans from the headstrong torrents of Helicon raise their clear-toned dirge with plaintive voice.

When therefore we force these voices forth from the depths of our body and discharge them straight out at the mouth, the pliant tongue, deft fashioner of words, gives them articulate utterance and the structure of the lips does its part in shaping them.

Therefore when the distance is not long between the point from which each several voice has started and that at which it arrives, the very words too must be plainly heard and distinguished syllable by syllable; for each voice retains its structure and retains its shape.

But if the space between be more than is suitable, the words must be huddled together in passing through much air and the voice be disorganized in

its flight through the same.

Therefore it is that you can hear a sound, yet cannot distinguish what the meaning of the words is: so huddled and hampered is the voice when it comes.

Again a single word often stirs the ears of a whole assembly of people, when uttered by the crier's mouth.

One voice therefore in a moment starts asunder into many voices, since it distributes itself separately into all the ears, stamping upon them the form and distinct sound of the word.

But such of the voices as do not fall directly on the ears, are carried past and lost, fruitlessly dispersed in air: some striking upon solid spots are thrown back and give back a sound and sometimes mock by an echo of the word.

When you fully perceive all this, you may explain to yourself and others how it is that in lonely spots rocks give back in regular succession forms of words like to those sent forth, as we seek our comrades straying about among the darkened hills and with loud voice call upon them scattered abroad.

I have seen places give back as many as six or seven voices, when you sent forth one: in such wise did the very hills dash back on hills and repeat the words thus trained to come back.

[579] These spots the people round fancy that the goat-footed satyrs and nymphs inhabit, and tell that they are the fauns by whose night-pervading noise and sportive play as they declare the still silence is broken and sounds produced of stringed instruments and sweet plaintive melodies, such as the pipe pours forth when beaten by the fingers of the players; the country-people hearing far and wide, what time Pan nodding the piny covering of his head half a beast's oft runs over the gaping reeds with curved lip, making the pipe without ceasing to pour forth its woodland song.

Other such like prodigies and marvels they tell of, that they may not haply bethought to inhabit lonely places, abandoned even by the gods.

On this account they vaunt such wonders in their stories or are led on by some other reason; inasmuch as the whole race of man is all too greedy after listening ears.

To proceed, you need not wonder how it is that through places, through which the eyes cannot see plain things, voices come and strike the ears.

We often see a conversation go on even through closed doors, sure enough because the voice can pass uninjured through the winding openings of things, while idols refuse to pass: they are torn to shreds, if the openings through which they glide are not straight, like those of glass, through which every image passes.

Again, a voice distributes itself in all directions, since voices are begotten one out of another, when a single voice has once gone forth and sprung into many, as a spark of fire is often wont to distribute itself into its constituent fires.

Therefore places are filled with voices which though far withdrawn out of

view yet are all in commotion and stirred by sound.

But idols all proceed in straight courses as soon as they have been discharged; and therefore you can never see beyond a wall, but you may hear voices outside it.

And yet this very voice even in passing through the walls of houses is blunted and enters the ears in a huddled state, and we seem to hear the sound rather than the actual words.

The tongue and palate whereby we perceive flavor, have not in them anything that calls for longer explanation or offers more difficulty.

In the first place we perceive flavor in the mouth when we press it out in chewing our food, in the same way as when one haply begins to squeeze with his hand and dry a sponge full of water.

[619] Next the whole of what we press out distributes itself through the cavities of the palate and the intricate openings of the porous tongue.

Therefore when the bodies of oozing flavor are smooth, they pleasantly touch and pleasantly feel all the parts if about the moist exuding quarters of the palate.

But on the other hand, when they rise in a mass they puncture and tear the sense according to the degree in which they are pervaded by roughness.

Next the pleasure from the flavor reaches as far as the palate; when however it has passed down through the throat, there is no pleasure while it is all distributing itself into the frame.

And it makes no matter what the food is with which the body is nurtured, provided you can digest what you take and transmit it into the frame and keep the stomach in an equable condition of moistness.

I will now explain how it is that different food is pleasant and nutritious for different creatures; also why that which to some is nauseous and bitter, may yet to others seem passing sweet; and why in these matters the difference and discrepancy is so great that what to one man is food, to another is rank poison; and there is actually a serpent which on being touched by a man's spittle wastes away and destroys itself by gnawing its body.

Again hellebore for us is rank poison, but helps to fatten goats and quails.

That you may know how this comes to pass, first of all you must remember what we have said before, that the seeds which are contained in things are mixed up in manifold ways.

Again all living creatures soever which take food, even as they are unlike on the outside, and, differing in each after its kind, an exterior contour of limbs bounds them, so likewise are they formed of seeds of varying shape.

Again since the seeds differ, there must be a discrepancy in the spaces between and the passages, which we name openings, in all the limbs and mouth and palate as well.

Some openings therefore must be smaller, some larger; some things must have them three-cornered, others square; many must be round, some many-angled after many fashions.

For as the relation between the shapes of seeds and their motions require, the openings also must differ accordingly in their shapes; and the passages must vary, as varies the texture formed by the seeds which bound them.

[658] For this reason when that which is sweet to some becomes bitter to others, for that creature to whom it is sweet the smoothest bodies must enter the cavities of the palate with power to feel them all over; but on the other hand in the case of those to whom the same thing is bitter within, rough and barbed seeds sure enough pass down the throat.

It is easy now from these principles to understand all particular cases: thus when a fever has attacked any one from too great a flow of bile, or a violent disease has been excited in any other way, thereupon the whole body is disordered and all the arrangements of particles then and there changed; the consequence of which is that the bodies which before were suited to excite sensation, suit no more; and those fit it better, which are able to make their way in and beget a bitter sense.

Both kinds for instance are mixed up in the flavor of honey: a point we have often proved before.

Now mark me, and I will discuss the way in which the contact of smell affects the nostrils: and first there must be many things from which a varied flow of smells streams and rolls on; and we must suppose that they thus stream and discharge and disperse themselves among all things alike; but one smell fits itself better to one creature, another to another on account of their unlike shapes; and therefore bees are drawn on by the smell of honey through the air to a very great distance, and so are vultures by carcasses.

Also the onward-reaching power of scent in dogs leads them whithersoever the cloven hoof of wild beasts has carried them in their course; and the smell of man is felt far away by the savior of the Romans' citadel, the bright white goose.

Thus different scents assigned to different creatures led each to its appropriate food and constrain them to recoil from nauseous poison, and in this way the races of beasts are preserved.

Of all these different smells then which strike the nostrils one may reach to a much greater distance than another; though none of them is carried so far as sound, as voice, to say nothing of things which strike the eyesight and provoke vision.

For in its mazy course each comes slowly on and is sooner lost, being gradually dispersed into the readily receiving expanse of air; first because coming out of its depths it with difficulty discharges itself from the thing: for the fact that all things are found to have a stronger smell when crushed, when pounded, when broken up by fire, shows that odors stream and withdraw from the inner parts of things: [698] next you may see that smell is formed of larger first-beginnings than voice, since it does not pass through stone walls, through which voice and sound are borne without fail.

For this reason also you will find that it is not so easy to trace out in what

quarter a thing which smells is situated; for the blow cools down as it loiters through the air, and the courier particles of things are no longer hot when they finish their race to sense; for which reason dogs are often at fault and lose the scent.

But what I have said is not found in smells and in the class of flavors only, but also the forms and colors of things are not all so well suited to the senses of all, but that some will be more distressing to the sight than others.

Moreover ravenous lions cannot face and bear to gaze upon a cock with flapping wings putting night to rout and wont to summon morning with shrill voice: in such wise they at once bethink themselves of flight, because sure enough in the body of cocks are certain seeds, and these, when they have been discharged into the eyes of lions, bore into the pupils and cause such sharp pain that courageous though they be, they cannot continue to face them; while at the same time these things cannot hurt at all our sight, either because they do not enter in or because the moment they enter a free passage out of the eyes is granted them, so that they cannot by staying behind hurt the eyes in any part!

Now mark, and hear what things move the mind, and learn in a few words whence the things which come into it do come.

I say first of all, that idols of things wander about many in number in many ways in all directions round, extremely thin; and these when they meet, readily unite, like a cobweb or piece of gold-leaf.

For these idols are far thinner in texture than those which take possession of the eyes and provoke vision; since these enter in through the porous parts of the body and stir the fine nature of the mind within and provoke sensation.

Therefore we see Centaurs and limbs of Scyllas and Cerberus-like faces of dogs and idols of those who are dead, whose bones earth holds in its embrace; since idols of every kind are everywhere borne about, partly those which are spontaneously produced within the air, partly all those which withdraw from various things and those which are formed by compounding the shapes of these.

[739] For assuredly no image of Centaur is formed out of a live one, since no such nature of living creature ever existed; but when images of a horse and a man have by chance come together, they readily adhere at once, as we said before, on account of their fine nature and thin texture.

All other things of the kind are produced in like fashion.

And when these from extreme lightness are borne on with velocity, as I showed before, any one subtle composite image you like readily moves the mind by a single stroke; for the mind is fine and is itself wondrously nimble.

That all this is done as I relate you may easily learn from what follows.

So far as the one is like another, seeing with the mind and seeing with the eyes must be produced in a like way.

Well then since I have shown that I perceive for instance a lion by means of idols which provoke the eyes, you may be sure that the mind is moved in a

like way, which by means of idols sees a lion or anything else just as well as the eyes, with this difference that it perceives much thinner idols.

And when sleep has prostrated the body, for no other reason does the mind's intelligence wake, except because the very same idols provoke our minds which provoke them when we are awake, and to such a degree that we seem without a doubt to perceive him whom life has left and death and earth gotten hold of.

This nature constrains to come to pass because all the senses of the body are then hampered and at rest throughout the limbs and cannot refute the unreal by real things.

Moreover memory is prostrate and relaxed in sleep and protests not that he has long been in the grasp of death and destruction whom the mind believes it sees alive.

Furthermore it is not strange that idols move and throw about their arms and other limbs in regular measure: for sometimes in sleep an image is seen to do this: when the first to wit has gone and a second then been born in another posture, that former one seems to have altered its attitude.

This remember you must assume to take place with exceeding celerity: so great is the velocity, so great the store of things; so great in any one unit of time that sense can seize is the store of particles, out of which the supply may go on.

And here many questions present themselves and many points must be cleared up by us, if we desire to give a plain exposition of things.

[779] The first question is why, when the wish has occurred to any one to think of a thing, his mind on the instant thinks of that very thing.

Do idols observe our will, and so soon as we will does an image present itself to us, if sea, if earth, ay or heaven is what we wish?

Assemblies of men, a procession, feasts, battles, everything in short does nature at command produce and provide? And though to increase the marvel the mind of others in the same spot and room is thinking of things all quite different.

What again are we to say, when we see in sleep idols advance in measured tread and move their pliant limbs, when in nimble wise they put out each pliant arm in turn and represent to the eyes over and over again an action with foot that moves in time?

Idols to wit are imbued with art and move about well-trained, to be able in the night-time to exhibit such plays.

Or will this rather be the truth? Because in one unit of time, when we can perceive it by sense and while one single word is uttered, many latent times are contained which reason finds to exist, therefore in any time you please all the several idols are at hand ready prepared in each several place.

And because they are so thin, the mind can see distinctly only those which it strains itself to see; therefore all that there are besides are lost, save only those for which it has made itself ready.

Moreover, it makes itself ready and hopes to see that which follows upon each thing; therefore the result does follow.

Do you not see that the eyes also, when they essay to discern things which are thin and fine, strain themselves and make themselves ready, and without that we cannot see distinctly?

And yet you may observe even in things which are plain before us, that if you do not attend, it is just as if the thing were all the time away and far distant?

What wonder then, if the mind loses all other things save those with which it is itself earnestly occupied?

Then too from small indications we draw the widest inferences and by our own fault entangle ourselves in the meshes of self-delusion.

Sometimes it happens too that an image of the same kind is not supplied, but what before was a woman, turns out in our hands to have changed into a man; or a different face and age succeed to the first.

But sleep and forgetfulness prevent us from feeling surprise at this.

And herein you should desire with all your might to shun the weakness, with a lively apprehension to avoid the mistake of supposing that the bright lights of the eyes were made in order that we might see; [826] and that the tapering ends of the shanks and hams are attached to the feet as a base in order to enable us to step out with long strides; or again that the forearms were slung to the stout upper arms and ministering hands given us on each side, that we might be able to discharge the needful duties of life.

Other explanations of like sort which men give, one and all put effect for cause through wrongheaded reasoning; since nothing was born in the body that we might use it, but that which is born begets itself a use: thus seeing did not exist before the eyes were born, nor the employment of speech ere the tongue was made; but rather the birth of the tongue was long anterior to language and the ears were made long before sound was heard, and all the limbs, I trow, existed before there was any employment for them: they could not therefore have grown for the purpose of being used.

But on the other hand, engaging in the strife of battle and mangling the body and staining the limbs with gore were in vogue long before glittering darts ever flew; and nature prompted to shun a wound or ever the left arm by the help of art held up before the person the defense of a shield.

Yes, and consigning the tired body to rest is much older than a soft-cushioned bed, and the slaking of thirst had birth before cups.

These things therefore which have been invented in accordance with the uses and wants of life, may well be believed to have been discovered for the purpose of being used.

Far otherwise is it with all those things which first were born, then afterwards made known the purposes to which they might be put; at the head of which class we see the senses and the limbs.

Wherefore again and again I repeat, it is quite impossible to believe that

they could have been made for the duties which they discharge.

It ought likewise to cause no wonder that the nature of the body of each living creature absolutely requires food I have shown that bodies ebb away and withdraw from things, many in number in many ways; but most numerous must be those which withdraw from living things; for because these are tried by active motion, and many particles are pressed out from the depths of the frame and carried off by sweating, many breathed out through the mouth, when they pant from exhaustion, from such causes the body becomes rarefied and the whole nature undermined; [866] and this state is attended by pain.

Food therefore is taken in order to give support to the frame and recruit the strength by its infusion, and to close up the open-mouthed craving for meat throughout limbs and veins.

The moisture too passes into all the parts which call for moisture; and many accumulated bodies of heat which cause a burning in our stomach, the approach of liquid scatters and quenches as if they were fire, so that dry heat can no longer parch the frame.

In this way then you see gasping thirst is drenched out of our body, in this way the hungry craving is satisfied.

Now how it comes to pass that we are able to step out when we please, and how it is given us to move about our limbs, and what cause is wont to push forward the great load of this our body I will tell: do you take in my words.

I say that idols of walking first present themselves to our mind and strike on the mind, as we said before: then the will arises; for no one begins to do anything, until his mind has first determined what it wills.

From the very fact that it determines such thing, there is an image of that thing.

When therefore the mind bestirs itself in such a way as to will to walk and step out, it strikes at the same moment the force of the soul which is spread over the whole body throughout the limbs and frame; and this is easily done, since the whole is held in close union with the mind.

Next the soul in its turn strikes the body, and thus the whole mass by degrees is pushed on and set in motion.

Then again, the body becomes also rarefied, and the air, as you see its nature is, being always so nimble in moving, comes and passes in great quantity through the opened pores and is thus distributed into the most minute parts of the body.

In this way then by these two causes acting in two ways the body like a ship is carried on by sails and wind.

And herein it need not excite any surprise that such very minute bodies can steer so great a body and turn about the whole of this our load; for wind though fine with subtle body drives and pushes on a large ship of large moving mass and one hand directs it however great the speed at which it is going and one rudder steers it to any point you like; and by means of blocks of pulleys and tread-wheels a machine stirs many things of great weight and

raises them up with slight effort.

[907] Now by what means yon sleep lets a stream of repose over the limbs and dispels from the breast the cares of the mind, I will tell in sweetly worded rather than in many verses; as the short song of the swan is better than the loud noise of cranes scattered abroad amid the ethereal clouds of the south.

Do you lend me a nice ear and a keen mind, that you may not deny what I say to be possible and secede with breast disdainfully rejecting the words of truth, you yourself being in fault the while and unable to discern.

Sleep mainly takes place when the force of the soul has been scattered about through the frame, and in part has been forced abroad and taken its departure, and in part has been thrust back and has withdrawn into the depths of the body: after that the limbs are relaxed and droop.

For there is no doubt that this sense exists in us by the agency of the soul; and when sleep obstructs the action of this sense, then we must assume that our soul has been disordered and forced abroad; not indeed all; for then the body would lie steeped in the everlasting chill of death.

Where no part of the soul remained behind concealed in the limbs, as fire remains concealed when buried under much ash, whence could sense be suddenly rekindled through the limbs, as flame can spring up from hidden fire?

But by what means this change of condition is accomplished and from what the soul can be disordered and the body grow faint, I will explain: do you mind that I waste not my words on the wind.

In the first place the body in its outer side, since it is next to and is touched by the air, must be thumped and beaten by its repeated blows; and for this reason all things as a rule are covered either by a hide or else by shells or by a callous skin or by bark.

When creatures breathe, this air at the same time buffets the inner side also, as it is inhaled and exhaled.

Therefore since the body is beaten on both sides alike and blows arrive by means of the small apertures at the primal parts and primal elements of our body, there gradually ensues a sort of breaking up throughout our limbs, the arrangements of the first-beginnings of body and mind getting disordered.

Then next a part of the soul is forced out and apart withdraws into the inner recesses; a part too scattered about through the frame cannot get united together and so act and be acted upon by motion; for nature intercepts all communication and blocks up all the passages; [950] and therefore sense retires deep into the frame as the motions are all altered.

And since there is nothing as it were to lend support to the frame, the body becomes weak and all the limbs are faint, the arms and eyelids droop and the hams even in bed often give way under you and relax their powers.

Then sleep follows on food, because food produces just the same effects as air, while it is distributed into all the veins; and that sleep is much the heaviest which you take when full or tired, because then the greatest number of bodies

fall into disorder, bruised by much exertion.

On the same principle the soul comes in part to be forced more deeply into the frame, and there is also a more copious emission of it abroad, and at the same time it is more divided and scattered in itself within you.

And generally to whatever pursuit a man is closely tied down and strongly attached, on whatever subject we have previously much dwelt, the mind having been put to a more than usual strain in it, during sleep we for the most part fancy that we are engaged in the same; lawyers think they plead causes and draw up covenants of sale, generals that they fight and engage in battle, sailors that they wage and carry on war with the winds, we think we pursue our task and investigate the nature of things constantly and consign it when discovered to writings in our native tongue.

So all other pursuits and arts are seen for the most part during sleep to occupy and mock the minds of men.

And whenever men have given during many days in succession undivided attention to games, we generally see that after they have ceased to perceive these with their senses, there yet remain passages open in the mind through which the same idols of things may enter.

Thus for many days those same objects present themselves to the eyes, so that even when awake they see dancers as they think moving their pliant limbs, and receive into the ears the clear music of the harp and speaking strings, and behold the same spectators and at the same time the varied decorations of the stage in all their brilliancy.

So great is the influence of zeal and inclination, so great is the influence of the things in which men have been habitually engaged, and not men only but all living creatures.

Thus you will see stout horses, even when their bodies are lying down, yet in their sleep sweat and pant without ceasing and strain their powers to the utmost as if for the prize, or as if the barriers were thrown open.

[991] And often during soft repose the dogs of hunters do yet all at once throw about their legs and suddenly utter cries and repeatedly snuff the air with their nostrils, as though they had found and were on the tracks of wild beasts; and after they are awake often chase the shadowy idols of stags, as though they saw them in full flight, until they have shaken off their delusions and come to themselves again.

And the fawning brood of dogs brought up tame in the house haste to shake their body and raise it up from the ground, as if they beheld unknown faces and features.

And the fiercer the different breeds are, the greater rage they must display in sleep.

But the various kinds of birds flee and suddenly in the night time trouble with their wings the groves of the gods, when in gentle sleep hawks and pursuing birds have appeared to show fight and offer battle.

Again the minds of men which pursue great aims under great emotions,

often during sleep pursue and carry on the same in like manner; kings take by storm, are taken, join battle, raise aloud cry as if stabbed on the spot.

Many struggle hard and utter groans in pain, and as if gnawed by the bite of panther or cruel lion fill all the place with loud cries.

Many during sleep speak of important affairs and have often and often disclosed their own guilt.

Many meet death; many as if tumbling down from high precipices to the ground with their whole body, are scared with terror and after sleep as if out of their judgment scarce come to themselves again, quite disordered by their body's turmoil.

Again a thirsty man sits down beside a river or a pleasant spring and gulps down well-nigh all the stream.

Cleanly people often, when sound asleep, believing that they are lifting their dress beside a urinal or the public vessels, pour forth the filtered liquid of their whole body, and the Babylonian coverlets of surpassing brilliancy are drenched.

Then too those into the boiling currents of whose age seed is for the first time passing, when the ripe fulness of days has produced it in their limbs, idols encounter from without from what body soever harbingers of a glorious face and a beautiful bloom, which stir and excite the frame.

That seed we have spoken of before is stirred up in us, as soon as ripe age fortifies the frame.

For as different causes set in motion and excite different things, so from man the sole influence of man draws forth human seed.

[1041] AS soon then as it has been forced out from and quits its proper seats throughout the limbs and frame, it withdraws itself from the whole body and meets together in appropriate places and rouses forthwith the appropriate parts of the body.

The places are excited and swell with seed, and the inclination arises to emit the seed towards that to which the fell desire all tends, and the body seeks that object from which the mind is wounded by love; for all as a rule fall towards their wound and the blood spurts out in that direction whence comes the stroke by which we are struck; and if he is at close quarters, the red stream covers the foe.

Thus then he who gets a hurt from the weapons of Venus, whatever be the object that hits him, inclines to the quarter whence he is wounded, and yearns to unite with it and join body with body; for a mute desire gives a presage of the pleasure.

This pleasure is for us Venus; from that desire is the Latin name of love, from that desire has first trickled into the heart yon drop of Venus' honeyed joy, succeeded soon by chilly care; for though that which you love is away, yet idols of it are at hand and its sweet name is present to the ears.

But it is meet to fly idols and scare away all that feeds love and turn your mind on another object, distract your passion elsewhere and not keep it, with

your thoughts once set on one object by love of it, and so lay up for yourself care and unfailling pain.

For the sore gathers strength and becomes inveterate by feeding, and every day the madness grows in violence and the misery becomes aggravated, unless you erase the first wounds by new blows and first heal them when yet fresh, roaming abroad after Venus the pandemian, or transfer to something else the emotions of your mind.

Nor is he who shuns love without the fruits of Venus, but rather enjoys those blessings which are without any pain: doubtless the pleasure from such things is more unalloyed for the healthy-minded than for the love-sick; for in the very moment of enjoying the burning desire of lovers wavers and wanders undecided, and they cannot tell what first to enjoy with eyes and hands.

What they have sought, they tightly squeeze and cause pain of body and often imprint their teeth on the lips and clash mouth to mouth in kissing, because the pleasure is not pure and there are hidden stings which stimulate to hurt, even that whatever it is from which spring those germs of frenzy.

[1084] But Venus with light hand breaks the force of these pains during love, and the fond pleasure mingled therein reins in the bites.

For in this there is hope, that from the same body whence springs their burning desire, their flame may likewise be quenched; though nature protests that the very opposite is the truth; and this is the one thing of all in which, when we have most of it, then all the more the breast burns with fell desire.

Meat and drink are taken into the body; and as they can fill up certain fixed parts, in this way the craving for drink and bread is easily satisfied; but from the face and beautiful bloom of man nothing is given into the body to enjoy save flimsy idols; a sorry hope which is often snatched off by the wind.

As when in sleep a thirsty man seeks to drink and water is not given to quench the burning in his frame, but he seeks the idols of waters and toils in vain and thirsts as he drinks in the midst of the torrent stream, thus in love Venus mocks lovers with idols, nor can bodies satisfy them by all their gazing upon them nor can they with their hands rub aught off the soft limbs, wandering undecided over the whole body.

At last when they have united and enjoy the flower of age, when the body now has a presage of delights and Venus is in the mood to sow the fields of woman, they greedily clasp each other's body and suck each other's lips and breathe in, pressing meanwhile teeth on each other's mouth; all in vain, since they can rub nothing off nor enter and pass each with his whole body into the other's body; for so sometimes they seem to will and strive to do: so greedily are they held in the chains of Venus, while their limbs melt overpowered by the might of the pleasure.

At length when the gathered desire has gone forth, there ensues for a brief while a short pause in the burning passion; and then returns the same frenzy, then comes back the old madness, when they are at a loss to know what they really desire to get, and cannot find what device is to conquer that mischief; in

such utter uncertainty they pine away by a hidden wound.

Then too they waste their strength and ruin themselves by the labor, then too their life is passed at the beck of another.

Meanwhile their estate runs away and is turned into Babylonian coverlets; [1124] duties are neglected and their good name staggers and sickens.

On her feet laugh elastic and beautiful Sicyonian shoes, yes, and large emeralds with green light are set in gold and the sea-colored dress is worn constantly and much used drinks in the sweat.

The noble earnings of their fathers are turned into hair-bands, head-dresses; sometimes are changed into a sweeping robe and Alidensian and Cean dresses.

Feasts set out with rich coverlets and viands, games, numerous cups, perfumes crowns and garlands are prepared; all in vain, since out of the very well-spring of delights rises up something of bitter, to pain amid the very flowers; either when the conscience-stricken mind haply gnaws itself with remorse to think that it is passing a life of sloth and ruining itself in brothels, or because she has launched forth some word and left its meaning in doubt and it cleaves to the love-sick heart and bums like living fire, or because it fancies she casts her eyes too freely about or looks on another, and it sees in her face traces of a smile.

And these evils are found in love that is lasting and highly prosperous; but in crossed and hopeless love are ills such as you may seize with closed eyes, past numbering; so that it is better to watch before-hand in the manner I have prescribed, and be on your guard not to be drawn in.

For to avoid falling into the toils of love is not so hard as, after you are caught, to get out of the nets you are in and to break through the strong meshes of Venus.

And yet even when you are entangled and held fast you may escape the mischief, unless you stand in your own way and begin by overlooking all the defects of her mind or those of her body, whoever it is whom you court and woo.

For this men usually do, blinded by passion, and attribute to the beloved those advantages which are not really theirs.

We therefore see women in ways manifold deformed and ugly to be objects of endearment and held in the highest admiration.

And one lover jeers at others and advises them to propitiate Venus, since they are troubled by a disgraceful passion, and often, poor wretch, gives no thought to his own ills greatest of all.

The black is a brune, the filthy and rank has not the love of order; the cat-eyed is a miniature Pallas, the stringy and wizened a gazelle; the dumpy and dwarfish is one of the graces, from top to toe all grace; the big and overgrown is awe-inspiring and full of dignity.

[1164] She is tongue-tied, cannot speak, then she has a lisp; the dumb is bashful; then the fire-spit, the teasing, the gossiping turns to a shining lamp.

One becomes a slim darling then when she cannot live from want of flesh; and she is only spare, who is half-dead with cough.

Then the fat and big-breasted is a Ceres' self big-breasted from Iacchus; the pug-nosed is a she Silenus and a satyress; the thick-lipped a very kiss.

It were tedious to attempt to report other things of the kind.

Let her however be of ever so great dignity of appearance; such that the power of Venus goes forth from all her limbs; yet there are others too; yet have we lived without her before; yet does she do, and we know that she does, in all things the same as the ugly woman; and fumigates herself, poor wretch, with nauseous perfumes, her very maids running from her and giggling behind her back.

But the lover, when shut out, often in tears covers the threshold with flowers and wreaths, and anoints the haughty doorposts with oil of marjoram; and imprints kisses, poor wretch, on the doors.

When however he has been admitted, if on his approach but one single breath should come in his way, he would seek specious reasons for departing, and the long-conned deep drawn complaint would fall to the ground; and then he would blame his folly on seeing that he had attributed to her more than it is right to concede to a mortal.

Nor is this unknown to our Venuses; wherefore all the more they themselves hide with the utmost pains all that goes on behind the scenes of life from those whom they wish to retain in the chains of love; but in vain, since you may yet draw forth from her mind into the light all these things and search into all her smiles; and if she is of a fair mind and not troublesome, overlook them in your turn and make allowance for human failings.

Nor does the woman sigh always with feigned passion, when she locks in her embrace and joins with her body the man's body and holds it, sucking his lips into her lips and drinking in his kisses.

Often she does it from the heart, and seeking mutual joys courts him to run the complete race of love.

And in no other way could birds, cattle, wild beasts, sheep and mares submit to bear the males, except because the very exuberance of nature in the females is in heat and burns and joyously draws in the Venus of the covering males.

[1201] See you not too how those whom mutual pleasure has chained are often tortured in their common chains?

How often in the highways do dogs, desiring to separate, eagerly pull different ways with all their might, while all the time they are held fast in the strong fetters of Venus!

This they would never do, unless they experienced mutual joys strong enough to force them into the snare and hold them in its meshes.

Wherefore again and again I repeat there is a common pleasure.

And when haply in mixing her seed with the man's, the woman by sudden force has overpowered and seized for herself his force, then children are

formed from the mothers' seed like to the mothers, as from the fathers' seed like to the fathers.

But those whom you see with a share of both forms, blending equally the features of the parents, grow from the union of the father's body and the mother's blood, when the mutual ardor of desire working in concert has brought and clashed together the seeds roused throughout the frame by the goads of Venus; and neither of the two has gotten the mastery nor has been mastered.

Sometimes too the children may spring up like their grandfathers and often resemble the forms of their grandfathers' fathers, because the parents often keep concealed in their bodies many first-beginnings mixed in many ways, which first proceeding from the original stock one father hands down to the next father; and then from these Venus produces forms after a manifold chance and repeats not only the features, but the voices and hair of their forefathers.

And the female sex equally springs from the father's seed and males go forth equally formed from the mother's body; since these distinctions no more proceed from the fixed seed of one or other parent than our faces and bodies and limbs: the birth is always formed out of the two seeds; and whichever parent that which is produced more resembles of that parent it has more than an equal share; as you may equally observe, whether it is a male child or a female birth.

Nor do the divine powers debar anybody from the power of begetting, forbidding him ever to receive the name of father from sweet children and forcing him to pass his life in a barren wedlock; as men commonly fancy when in sorrow they drench the altars with much blood and pile the raised altars with offerings, to make their wives pregnant with abundant seed.

[1239] In vain they weary the divinity of the gods and the sacred lots.

They are barren sometimes from the too great thickness of the seed, sometimes from its undue fluidity and thinness: because the thin is unable to get a firm hold on the right spots, it at once passes away and is repelled and withdrawn abortively: since by others again a too thick seed is discharged in a state more solid than is suitable, it either does not fly forth with so prolonged a stroke or cannot equally pass into the proper spots or when it has passed in with difficulty mixes with the woman's seed.

For well-assorted matches are found to be of great importance; and some males impregnate some females more readily than others, and other females conceive and become pregnant more readily from other males.

And many women have hitherto been barren during several marriages and have yet in the end found mates from whom they could conceive children and be enriched with a sweet offspring.

And often even for those to whom hitherto wives however fruitful had been unable in their house to bear, has been found a compatible nature, enabling them to fortify their age with sons.

Of such great importance is it in order that seeds may agree and blend with seeds in a way to promote birth whether the thick comes into contact with the fluid and the fluid with the thick.

And on this point it matters much on what diet life is supported; for by some foods seed is thickened in the limbs, and by others again is thinned and wasted.

And in what modes the intercourse goes on, is likewise of very great moment; for women are commonly thought to conceive more readily after the manner of wild beasts and quadrupeds, because the seeds in this way can find the proper spots in consequence of the position of the body.

Nor have wives the least use for effeminate motions: a woman hinders and stands in the way of her own conceiving, when thus she acts; for she drives the furrow out of the direct course and path of the share and turns away from the proper spots the stroke of the seed.

And thus for their own ends harlots are wont to move, in order not to conceive and lie in child-bed frequently, and at the same time to render Venus more attractive to men.

This our wives have surely no need of.

Sometimes too by no divine grace and arrows of Venus a sorry woman of inferior beauty comes to be loved; ^[1280] for the wife sometimes by her own acts and accommodating manners and by elegant neatness of person readily habituates you to pass your life with her.

Moreover custom renders love attractive; for that which is struck by oft-repeated blows however lightly, yet after long course of time is overpowered and gives way.

See you not too that drops of water falling on stones after long course of time scoop a hole through these stones?

BOOK V.

[1] WHO is able with powerful genius to frame a poem worthy of the grandeur of the things and these discoveries? Or who is so great a master of words as to be able to devise praises equal to the deserts of him who left to us such prizes won and earned by his own genius? None, methinks, who is formed of mortal body.

For if we must speak as the acknowledged grandeur of the things itself demands, a god he was, a god, most noble Memmius, who first found out that plan of life which is now termed wisdom, and who by trained skill rescued life from such great billows and such thick darkness and moored it in so perfect a calm and in so brilliant a light.

Compare the godlike discoveries of others in old times: Ceres is famed to have pointed out to mortals corn, and Liber the vine-born juice of the grape; though life might well have subsisted without these things, as we are told some nations even now live without them.

But a happy life was not possible without a clean breast; wherefore with more reason this man is deemed by us a god, from whom come those sweet solaces of existence which even now are distributed over great nations and gently soothe men's minds.

Then if you shall suppose that the deeds of Hercules surpass his, you will be carried still farther away from true reason.

For what would yon great gaping maw of Nemean lion now harm us and the bristled Arcadian boar?

Ay or what could the bull of Crete do and the hydra plague of Lerna, fenced round with its envenomed snakes?

Or how could the triple-breasted might of threefold Geryon, [how could the birds with brazen arrowy feathers] that dwelt in the Stymphalian swamps do us such mighty injury, and the horses of Thracian Diomedes breathing fire from their nostrils along the Bistonian borders and Ismara?

[32] And the serpent which guards the bright golden apples of the Hesperides, fierce, dangerous of aspect, girding the tree's stem with his enormous body, what harm pray could he do us beside the Atlantic shore and its sounding main, which none of us goes near and no barbarian ventures to approach?

And all other monsters of the kind which have been destroyed, if they had not been vanquished, what harm could they do, I ask, though now alive?

None methinks: the earth even now so abounds to repletion in wild beasts and is filled with troublous terror throughout woods and great mountains and deep forests; places which we have it for the most part in our own power to shun.

But unless the breast is cleared, what battles and dangers must then find their way into us in our own despite! What poignant cares inspired by lust

then rend the distressful man, and then also what mighty fears! And pride, filthy lust and wantonness? What disasters they occasion! And luxury and all sorts of sloth?

He therefore who shall have subdued all these and banished them from the mind by words, not arms, shall he not have a just title to be ranked among the gods?

And all the more so that he was wont to deliver many precepts in beautiful and god-like phrase about the immortal gods themselves and to open up by his teachings all the nature of things.

While walking in his footsteps I follow out his reasonings and teach by my verses, by what law all things are made, what necessity there is then for them to continue in that law, and how impotent they are to annul the binding statutes of time: foremost in which class of things the nature of the mind has been proved to be formed of a body that had birth and to be unable to endure unscathed through great time, mere idols being wont to mock the mind in sleep, when we seem to see him whom life has abandoned.

To continue, the order of my design has now brought me to this point, where I must proceed to show that the world is formed of a mortal body and at the same time had birth; to show too in what way that union of matter founded earth, heaven, sea, stars, sun, and the ball of the moon; also what living creatures sprang out of the earth, as well as those which never at any time were born; in what way too mankind began to use with one another varied speech by the names conferred on things; [73] and also in what ways yon fear of the gods gained an entry into men's breasts, and now throughout the world maintains as holy fanes, lakes, groves, altars, and idols of the gods.

Furthermore, I shall make clear by what force piloting nature guides the courses of the sun and the wanderings of the moon; lest haply we imagine that these of their own free will between heaven and earth traverse their everlasting orbits, graciously furthering the increase of crops and living creatures, or we think they roll on by any forethought of the gods.

For they who have been rightly taught that the gods lead a life without care, if nevertheless they wonder by what plan all things can be carried on, above all in regard to those things which are seen overhead in the ethereal borders, are borne back again into their old religious scruples and take unto themselves hard taskmasters, whom they poor wretches believe to be almighty, not knowing what can, what cannot be, in short by what system each thing has its powers defined, its deep-set boundary mark.

Well then not to detain you any longer by mere promises, look before all on seas and lands and heaven: their threefold nature, their three bodies, Memmius, three forms so unlike, three such wondrous textures a single day shall give over to destruction; and the mass and fabric of the world upheld for many years shall tumble to ruin.

Nor can I fail to perceive with what a novel and strange effect it falls upon the mind, this destruction of heaven and earth that is to be, and how hard it is

for me to produce a full conviction of it by words; as is the case when you bring to the ears a thing hitherto unexampled, and yet you cannot submit it to the eyesight nor put it into the hands; through which the straightest highway of belief leads into the human breast and quarters of the mind.

But yet I will speak out: it well may be that the reality itself will bring credit to my words and that you will see earthquakes arise and all things grievously shattered to pieces in a short time.

But this may pilot fortune guide far away from us, and may reason rather than the reality convince that all things may be overpowered and tumble in with a frightful crash.

But before I shall begin on this question to pour forth decrees of fate with more sanctity and much more certainty than the Pythia who speaks out from the tripod and laurel of Phoebus, I will clearly set forth to you many comforting topics in learned language; [114] lest held in the yoke of religion you haply suppose that earth and sun and heaven, sea, stars and moon must last for ever with divine body; and therefore think it right that they after the fashion of the giants should all suffer punishment for their monstrous guilt, who by their reasoning displace the walls of the world and seek to quench the glorious sun of heaven, branding immortal things in mortal speech; though in truth these things are so far from possessing divinity and are so unworthy of being reckoned in the number of gods, that they may be thought to afford a notable instance of what is quite without vital motion and sense.

For it is quite impossible to suppose that the nature and judgment of the mind can exist with any body whatever; even as a tree cannot exist in the ether nor clouds in the salt sea, nor can fishes live in the fields nor blood exist in woods nor sap in stones.

Where each thing can grow and abide is fixed and ordained.

Thus the nature of the mind cannot come into being alone without the body nor exist far away from the sinews and blood.

But if (for this would be much more likely to happen than that) the force itself of the mind might be in the head or shoulders or heels or might be born in any other part of the body, it would after all be wont to abide in one and the same man or vessel.

But since in our body even it is fixed and seen to be ordained where the soul and the mind can severally be and grow, it must still more strenuously be denied that it can abide out of the body and the living form altogether in crumbling clods of earth or in the fire of the sun or in water or in the high borders of ether.

These things therefore are not possessed of divine sense, since they cannot be quickened with the vital feeling.

This too you may not possibly believe, that the holy seats of the gods exist in any parts of the world: the fine nature of the gods far withdrawn from our senses is hardly seen by the thought of the mind; and since it has ever eluded the touch and stroke of the hands, it must touch nothing which is tangible for

us; for that cannot touch which does not admit of being touched in turn.

And therefore their seats as well must be unlike our seats, fine, even as their bodies are fine.

All which I will prove to you later in copious argument.

To say again that for the sake of men they have willed to set in order the glorious nature of the world and therefore it is meet to praise the work of the gods, calling as it does for all praise, and to believe that it will be eternal and immortal, and that it is an unholy thing ever to shake by any force from its fixed seats that which by the forethought of the gods in ancient days has been established on everlasting foundations for mankind, or to assail it by speech and utterly overturn it from top to bottom; [164] and to invent and add other figments of the kind, Memmius, is all sheer folly.

For what advantage can our gratitude bestow on immortal and blessed beings, that for our sakes they should take in hand to administer aught? And what novel incident should have induced them hitherto at rest so long after to desire to change their former life? For it seems natural he should rejoice in a new state of things, whom old things annoy; but for him whom no ill has befallen in times gone by when he passed a pleasant existence, what could have kindled in such a one a love of change?

Did life lie groveling in darkness and sorrow, until the first dawn of the birth time of things?

Or what evil had it been for us never to have been born?

Whoever has been born must want to continue in life, so long as fond pleasure shall keep him; but for him who has never tasted the love, never been on the lists of life, what harm not to have been born?

Whence again was first implanted in the gods a pattern for begetting things in general as well as the preconception of what men are, so that they knew and saw in mind what they wanted to make? And in what way was the power of first-beginnings ever ascertained, and what they could effect by a change in their mutual arrangements, unless nature herself gave the model for making things?

For in such wise the first-beginnings of things many in number in many ways impelled by blows for infinite ages back and kept in motion by their own weights have been wont to be carried along and to unite in all manner of ways and thoroughly test every kind of production possible by their mutual combinations; that it is not strange if they have also fallen into arrangements and have come into courses like to those out of which this sum of things is now carried on by constant renewing.

But if I did not know what first-beginnings of things are, yet this judging by the very arrangements of heaven I would venture to affirm, and led by many other facts to maintain, that the nature of things has by no means been made for us by divine power: [199] so great are the defects with which it is encumbered.

In the first place of all, the space which the vast reach of heaven covers, a

portion greedy mountains and forests of wild beasts have occupied, rocks and wasteful pools take up and the sea which holds wide apart the coasts of different lands.

Next, of nearly two thirds burning heat and the constant fall of frost rob mortals.

What is left for tillage, even that nature by its power would overrun with thorns, unless the force of man made head against it, accustomed for the sake of a livelihood to groan beneath the strong hoe and to cut through the earth by pressing down the plow.

Unless by turning up the fruitful clods with the share and laboring the soil of the earth we stimulate things to rise, they could not spontaneously come up into the clear air; and even then sometimes when things earned with great toil now put forth their leaves over the lands and are all in blossom, either the ethereal sun bums them up with excessive heats or sudden rains and cold frosts cut them off, and the blasts of the winds waste them by a furious hurricane.

Again, why does nature give food and increase to the frightful race of wild beasts dangerous to mankind both by sea and land? Why do the seasons of the year bring diseases in their train? Why stalks abroad untimely death? Then, too the baby, like to a sailor cast away by the cruel waves, lies naked on the ground, speechless, wanting every furtherance of life, soon as nature by the throes of birth has shed him forth from his mother's womb into the borders of light: he fills the room with a rueful wading, as well he may whose destiny it is to go through in life so many ills.

But the different flocks herds and wild beasts grow up; they want no rattles; to none of them need be addressed the fond broken accents of the fostering nurse; they ask not different dresses according to the season; no nor do they want arms or lofty walls, whereby to protect their own, the earth itself and nature manifold in her works producing in plenty all things for all.

First of all, since the body of the earth and water and the light breath of air and burning heats, out of which this sum of things is seen to be formed, do all consist of a body that had a birth and is mortal, the whole nature of the world must be reckoned of a like body.

For those things whose parts and members we see to be of a body that had a birth and of forms that are mortal, we perceive to be likewise without exception mortal, and at the same time to have had a birth.

[242] Since therefore I see that the chiefest members and parts of the world are destroyed and begotten anew, I may be sure that for heaven and earth as well there has been a time of beginning and there will be a time of destruction.

And herein that you may not think I have unfairly seized on this point for myself, because I have assumed that earth and fire are mortal and have not doubted that water and air perish, and have said that these are likewise begotten and grow afresh, mark the proofs: First of all some portion of the earth, burnt up by constant suns, trampled by a multitude of feet, sends forth a

cloud and flying eddies of dust, which the strong winds disperse over the whole air.

Part too of the soil is put underwater by rains, and rivers graze against and eat into the banks.

Again whatever increases something else is in its turn replenished; and since beyond a doubt earth the universal mother is found at the same time to be the general tomb of things, therefore you see she is lessened and increases and grows again.

Furthermore, that sea rivers fountains always stream over with new moisture and that waters well up without ceasing, it needs no words to prove: the great flow of waters from all sides clearly shows it.

But then the water on the surface is always taken off, and thus it is that on the whole there is no overflow, partly because the seas are lessened by the strong winds sweeping over them and by the ethereal sun decomposing them with his rays; partly because the water is diffused below the surface over all lands; for the salt is strained off and the matter of liquid streams back again to the source and all meets together at the river-heads, and then flows over the lands in a fresh current, where a channel once scooped out has carried down the waters with liquid foot.

And next I will speak of the air which is changed over its whole body every hour in countless ways.

For whatever ebbs from things, is all borne always into the great sea of air; and unless it in return were to give back bodies to things and to recruit them as they ebb, all things ere now would have been dissolved and changed into air.

It therefore ceases not to be begotten from things and to go back into things, since it is a fact that all things constantly ebb.

[280] Likewise, the abundant source of clear light, the ethereal sun, constantly floods heaven with fresh brightness and supplies the place of light on the instant by new light; for every previous emission of brightness is quite lost to it, wherever it falls.

This you may know from the following examples: as soon as ever clouds begin to pass below the sun and to break off so to say the rays of light, forthwith their lower part is wholly lost, and the earth is overshadowed wherever the clouds pass over; so that you may know that things constantly require new irradiation and that all the preceding emissions of light are lost, and in no other way can things be seen in the sun, unless the fountain head of light itself send a supply.

Moreover, you see, nightly lights which belong to earth, such as hanging lamps and torches bright with darting flames, hasten in like fashion amid great darkness with ministering heat to supply new light; are eager to bicker with fires, are eager; nor is the light ever broken off nor does it quit the spots illuminated: with such suddenness is its destruction concealed by the swift birth of flame from all the fires at once.

In the same way then we must believe that sun moon and stars emit light from fresh and ever fresh supplies rising up, and always lose every previous discharge of flames; that you may not haply believe that these flourish indestructible.

Again see you not that even stones are conquered by time, that high towers fall and rocks molder away, that shrines and idols of gods are worn out with decay, and that the holy divinity cannot prolong the bounds of fate or struggle against the fixed laws of nature?

Then see we not the monuments of men, fallen to ruin, ask for themselves as well whether you'd believe that they decay with years? See we not basalt rocks tumble down riven away from high mountains and unable to endure and suffer the strong might of finite age? Surely they would never fall suddenly thus riven away, if for infinite time past they had held out against all the batteries of age without a crash.

Again gaze on this, which about and above holds in its embrace all the earth: if it begets all things out of itself, as some say, and takes them back when they are destroyed, then the whole of it has had a birth and is of a mortal body; for whatever gives increase and food out of itself to other things must be lessened; [323] and must be replenished, when it takes things back.

Again, if there was no birth-time of earth and heaven and they have been from everlasting, why before the Theban war and the destruction of Troy have not other poets as well sung other themes?

Whither have so many deeds of men so often passed away, why live they nowhere embodied in lasting records of fame? The truth methinks is that the sum has but a recent date and the nature of the world is new and has but lately had its commencement.

Wherefore even now some arts are receiving their last polish, some are even in course of growth: just now many improvements have been made in ships; only yesterday musicians have given birth to tuneful melodies; then too this nature or system of things has been discovered lately, and I the very first of all have only now been found able to transfer it into native words.

But if haply you believe that before this all things have existed just the same, but that the generations of men have perished by burning heat, or that cities have fallen by some great concussion of the world, or that after constant rains devouring rivers have gone forth over the earth and have whelmed towns, so much the more you must yield and admit that there will be entire destruction too of earth and heaven; for when things were tried by so great distempers and so great dangers, at that time had a more disastrous cause pressed upon them, they would far and wide have gone to destruction and mighty ruin.

And in no other way are we proved to be mortals, except because we all alike in turn fall sick of the same diseases which those had whom nature has withdrawn from life.

Again whatever things last for ever, must either, because they are of solid

body, repel strokes and not suffer aught to pass into them, sufficient to disunite the closely massed parts within: such are the bodies of matter whose nature we have shown before: or they must be able to endure through all time for this reason, because they are exempt from blows, as void is which remains untouched and suffers not a jot from any stroke; or else because there is no extent of room around, into which things so to say may depart and be broken up: in this way the sum of sums is eternal and there is no place outside into which things may spring asunder, nor are there anybodies which can fall upon them and dissolve them by a powerful blow.

[364] But the nature of the world, as I have shown, is neither of solid body, since void is mixed up in things, nor is it again like void, no nor is there lack of bodies that may haply rise up in mass out of the infinite and overthrow this sum of things with furious tornado or bring upon them some other perilous disaster; nor further is the nature of room or the space of deep void wanting, into which the walls of the world may be scattered abroad; or they may be assailed and perish by some other force.

Therefore the gate of death is not closed against heaven or sun or earth or the deep waters of the sea, but stands open and looks towards them with huge wide-gaping maw.

And therefore also you must admit that these things likewise had a birth; for things which are of mortal body could not for an infinite time back up to the present have been able to set at naught the puissant strength of immeasurable age.

Again since the chiefest members of the world fight so hotly together, fiercely stirred by no hallowed civil warfare, see you not that some limit may be set to their long struggle?

Either when the sun and all heat shall have drunk up all the waters and gotten the mastery: this they are ever striving to do, but as yet are unable to accomplish their endeavors: such abundant supplies the rivers furnish, and threaten to turn aggressors and flood all things with a deluge from the deep gulfs of ocean; all in vain, since the winds sweeping over the seas and the ethereal sun decomposing them with his rays do lessen them, and trust to be able to dry all things up before water can attain the end of its endeavor.

Such a war do they breathe out with undecided issue, and strive with each other to determine it for mighty ends; though once by the way fire got the upper hand and once, as the story goes, water reigned paramount in the fields.

Fire gained the mastery and licked and burnt up many things, when the headstrong might of the horses of the sun dashed from the course and hurried Phaethon through the whole sky and over all lands.

But the almighty father, stirred then to fierce wrath, with a sudden thunder stroke dashed Phaethon down from his horses to earth, and the sun meeting him as he fell caught from him the ever-burning lamp of the world and got in hand the scattered steeds and yoked them shaking all over; then guided them on their proper course and gave fresh life to all things.

[405] Thus to wit have the old poets of the Greeks sung; though it is all too widely at variance with true reason.

Fire may gain the mastery when more bodies of matter than usual have gathered themselves up out of the infinite; and then its powers decay, vanquished in some way or other, or else things perish burnt up by the torrid air.

Water too of yore gathered itself and began to get the mastery, as the story goes, when it whelmed many cities of men; and then when all that force that had gathered itself up out of the infinite, by some means or other was turned aside and withdrew, the rains were stayed and the rivers abated their fury.

But in what ways yon concourse of matter founded earth and heaven and the deeps of the sea, the courses of the sun and moon, I will next in order describe.

For verily not by design did the first-beginnings of things station themselves each in its right place by keen intelligence, nor did they bargain sooth to say what motions each should assume, but because the first-beginnings of things many in number in many ways impelled by blows for infinite ages back and kept in motion by their own weights have been wont to be carried along and to unite in all manner of ways and thoroughly to test every kind of production possible by their mutual combinations, therefore it is that spread abroad through great time after trying unions and motions of every kind they at length meet together in those masses which suddenly brought together become often the rudiments of great things, of earth sea and heaven and the race of living things.

At this time then neither could the sun's disk be discerned flying aloft with its abundant light, nor the stars of great ether, nor sea nor heaven, no nor earth nor air, nor could any thing be seen like to our things, but only a strange stormy crisis and medley, gathered together out of first-beginnings of every kind, whose state of discord joining battle disordered their interspaces passages, connections, weights, blows, clashings, and motions, because by reason of their unlike forms and varied shapes they could not all remain thus joined together nor fall into mutually harmonious motions.

Then next the several parts began to fly asunder and things to be joined like with like and to mark off the world and portion out its members and arrange its mighty parts, that is to say, to separate high heaven from earth, and let the sea spread itself out apart with its unmixed water, and likewise let the fires of ether spread apart pure and unmixed.

[449] For first the several bodies of earth, because they were heavy and closely entangled, met together in the middle and took up all of them the lowest positions; and the more they got entangled and the closer their union, the more they squeezed out those particles which were to make up sea stars sun and moon and the walls of the great world.

All these are of smooth and round seeds and of much smaller elements than the earth.

Therefore the fire-laden ether first burst out from the different parts of the earth through all the porous openings and lightly bore off with itself many fires; much in the same way as we often see, so soon as the morning light of the beaming sun blushes golden over the grass jeweled with dew, and the pools and the ever-running rivers exhale a mist, and even as the earth itself is sometimes seen to smoke; and when all these are gathered together aloft, then do clouds on high with a now cohering body weave a covering beneath heaven.

In this way therefore then the light and expansive ether with its now cohering body swept round and arched itself on all sides and expanding widely in all directions round in this way fenced all other things in with its greedy grasp.

After it followed the rudiments of sun and moon, whose spheres turn round in air midway between earth and ether: these neither earth has taken unto itself nor greatest ether, because they were neither heavy enough to sink and settle down nor light enough to glide along the uppermost borders; they yet however are so placed between the two as to wheel along their life-like bodies and still to be parts of the whole world; just as in us some members may be at rest, while others at the same time are in motion.

These things then being withdrawn, the earth in those parts where the vast azure level of ocean now spreads, in a moment sank in and drenched with salt flood the hollows.

At every day the more the heats of ether round and the rays of the sun on all sides compressed the earth into a close mass by oft-repeated blows on all its outer edges, so that thus buffeted it was condensed and drawn together about its center, ever the more did the salt sweat squeezed out of its body increase by its oozings the sea and floating fields, and ever the more did those many bodies of heat and air escape and fly abroad and condense far away from earth the high glittering quarters of heaven.

[492] The plains sank down, the high hills grew in elevation; for the rocks could not settle down nor all the parts sink to one uniform level.

Thus then the ponderous mass of earth was formed with close-cohering body and all the slime of the world so to speak slid down by its weight to the lowest point and settled at the bottom like dregs.

Then the sea, then the air, then the fire-laden ether itself, all are left unmixed with their clear bodies; and some are lighter than others, and clearest and lightest of all ether floats upon the airy currents, and blends not its clear body with the troubled airs; it suffers all these things below to be upset with furious hurricanes, suffer them to be troubled by wayward storms; while it carries along its own fires gliding with a changeless onward sweep.

For that ether may stream on gently and with one uniform effort the Pontos shows, a sea which streams with a changeless current, ever preserving one uniform gliding course.

Let us now sing what causes the motions of the stars.

In the first place, if the great sphere of heaven revolves, we must say that an air presses on the pole at each end and confines it on the outside and closes it in at both ends; and then that a third air streams above and moves in the same direction in which roll on as they shine the stars of the eternal world; or else that this third air streams below in order to carry up the sphere in the contrary direction; just as we see rivers turn wheels and water-scoops.

It is likewise quite possible too that all the heaven remains at rest, while at the same time the glittering signs are carried on; either because rapid heats of ether are shut in and whirl round while seeking a way out and roll their fires in all directions through heaven's Summanian quarters; or else an air streaming from some part from another source outside drives and whirls the fires; or else they may glide on of themselves going whithersoever the food of each calls and invites them, feeding their flamy bodies everywhere throughout heaven.

For which of these causes is in operation in this world, it is not easy to affirm for certain; but what can be and is done throughout the universe in various worlds formed on various plans, this I teach, and I go on to set forth several causes which may exist throughout the universe for the motions of stars; one of which however must in this world also be the cause that imparts lively motion, to the signs; but to dictate which of them it is, is by no means the duty of the man who advances step by step.

[534] And in order that the earth may rest in the middle of the world, it is proper that its weight should gradually pass away and be lessened, and that it should have another nature underneath it conjoined from the beginning of its existence and formed into one being with the airy portions of the world in which it is embodied and lives.

For this reason it is no burden and does not weigh down the air; just as his limbs are of no weight to a man nor is his head a burden to his neck, nor do we feel that the whole weight of the body rests on the feet; but whatever weights come from without and are laid upon us, hurt us though they are often very much smaller: of such great moment it is what function each thing has to perform.

Thus then the earth is not an alien body suddenly brought in and forced from some other quarter on air alien to it, but was conceived together with it at the first birth of the world and is a fixed portion of that world, just as our limbs are seen to be to us.

Again the earth when suddenly shaken by loud thunder shakes by its motion all the things which are above it; and this it could in no wise do, unless it had been fast bound with the airy portions of the world and with heaven.

For the earth and they cohere with one another by common roots, conjoined and formed into a single being from the beginning of their existence.

See you not too that great as is the weight of our body, the force of the soul, though of the extremest fineness, supports it, because it is so closely conjoined and formed into a single being with it?

Then too what is able to lift the body with a nimble bound save the force of the mind which guides the limbs?

Now do you see what power a subtle nature may have, when it is conjoined with a heavy body, as the air is conjoined with the earth and the force of the mind in us?

Again, the disk of the sun cannot be much larger nor its body of heat much smaller, than they appear to be to our senses.

For from whatever distances fires can reach us with their light and breathe on our limbs burning heat, those distances take away nothing by such spaces between from the body of the flames, the fire is not in the least narrowed in appearance.

Therefore since the heat of the sun and the light which it sheds reach our senses and stroke the proper places, the form too and size of the sun must be seen from this earth in their real dimensions, so that you may not add anything whatever more or less.

[573] And whether the moon as it is borne on illuminates places with a borrowed light, or emits its own light from its own body, whatever that is, the form with which it is thus borne on is not at all larger than the one which it presents to our eyes seems to us to be.

For all things which we see at a great distance through much air look dimmed in appearance before their size is diminished.

Therefore since the moon presents a bright aspect and well-defined form, it must be seen on high by us from this earth precisely such as it is in the outline which defines it, and of the size it actually is.

Lastly in the case of all those fires of ether which you observe from this earth, since in the case of fires which we see here on earth, so long as their flickering is distinct, so long as their heat is perceived, their size is seen sometimes to change to a very very small extent either way, according to the distance at which they are, you may infer that the fires of ether may be smaller than they look in an extremely minute degree or larger by a very small and insignificant fraction.

This likewise need not excite wonder, how it is that so small a body as yon sun can emit so great a light, enough to flood completely seas and all lands and heaven and to steep all things in its burning heat.

It well may be that a single spring for the whole world may open up from this spot and gush out in plenteous stream and shoot forth light, because elements of heat meet together from all sides out of the whole world in such manner and the mass of them thrown together streams to a point in such manner, that this heat wells forth from a single source.

See you not too what a breadth of meadowland a small spring of water sometimes floods, streaming out over the fields?

It is likewise possible that heat from the sun's flame though not at all great may infect the whole air with fervent fires, if haply the air is in a suitable and susceptible state, so that it can be kindled when struck by small bodies of

heat; thus we see sometimes a general conflagration from a single spark catch fields of corn and stubble.

Perhaps too the sun as he shines aloft with rosy lamp has round about him much fire with heats that are not visible, and thus the fire may be marked by no radiance, so that fraught with heat it increases to such a degree the stroke of the rays.

[615] Nor with regard to the sun is there one single explanation, certain and manifest, of the way in which he passes from his summer positions to the midwinter turning-point of Capricorn and then coming back from thence bends his course to the solstitial goal of cancer, and how the moon is seen once a month to pass over that space, in traversing which the sun spends the period of a year.

No single plain cause, I say, has been assigned for these things.

It seems highly probable that that may be the truth which the revered judgment of the worthy man Democritus maintains: the nearer the different constellations are to the earth, the less they can be carried along with the whirl of heaven; for the velocity of its force, he says, passes away and the intensity diminishes in the lower parts, and therefore the sun is gradually left behind with the rearward signs, because he is much lower than the burning signs.

And the moon more than the sun: the lower her path is and the more distant she is from heaven and the nearer she approaches to earth, the less she can keep pace with the signs.

For the fainter the whirl is in which she is borne along, being as she is lower than the sun, so much the more all the signs around overtake and pass her.

Therefore it is that she appears to come back to every sign more quickly, because the signs go more quickly back to her.

It is quite possible too that from quarters of the world crossing the sun's path two airs may stream each in its turn at a fixed time; one of which may force the sun away from the summer signs so far as his midwinter turning-point and freezing cold, and the other may force him back from the freezing shades of cold as far as the heat-laden quarters and burning signs.

And in like manner we must suppose that the moon, and the stars which make revolutions of great years in great orbits may pass by means of airs from opposite quarters in turn.

See you not too that clouds from contrary winds pass in contrary directions, the upper in a contrary way to the lower?

Why may not yon stars just as well be borne on through their great orbits in ether by currents contrary one to the other?

But night buries the earth in thick darkness, either when the sun after his long course has struck upon the utmost parts of heaven and now exhausted has blown forth all his fires shaken by their journey and weakened by passing through much air: [654] or else because the same force which has carried on his orb above the earth, compels him to change his course and pass below the

earth.

At a fixed time too Matuta spreads rosy morning over the borders of ether and opens up her light, either because the same sun, coming back below the earth, seizes heaven before his time trying to kindle it with his rays; or because fires meet together and many seeds of heat are accustomed to stream together at a fixed time, which cause new sunlight to be born every day.

Thus they tell that from the high mountains of Ida scattered fires are seen at day-break, that these then unite as it were into a single ball and make up an orb.

And herein it ought to cause no surprise that these seeds of fire stream together at a time so surely fixed and reproduce the radiance of the sun.

For we see many occurrences which take place at a fixed time in all things.

At a fixed time trees blossom and at a fixed time shed their blossoms; and at a time no less surely fixed age bids the teeth be shed and the boy put on the soft dress of puberty and let a soft beard fall down equally from each cheek.

Lastly lightnings, snow, rains, clouds, and winds take place at not very irregular seasons of year.

For where causes from their very first beginnings have been in this way and things have thus fallen out from the first birth of the world, in due sequence too they now come round after a fixed order.

Likewise days may lengthen and nights wane, and days shorten when the nights receive increase, either because the same sun running his course below the earth and above in curves of unlike length parts the borders of ether and divides his orbit into unequal halves; and as he comes round adds on in the opposite half just as much as he has subtracted from the other of the two halves, until he has arrived at that sign of heaven, where the node of the year makes the shades of night of the same length as the daylight.

For when the sun's course lies midway between the blast of the north and of the south, heaven keeps his two goals apart at distances now rendered exactly equal on account of the position of the whole starry circle, in gliding through which the sun takes up the period of a year, lighting with slanting rays earth and heaven; as is clearly shown by the plans of those who have mapped out all the quarters of heaven as they are set off with their array of signs.

[695] Or else because the air is denser in certain parts, therefore the quivering beam of fire is retarded below the earth and cannot easily pass through and force its way out to its place of rising: for this reason in winter-time nights linger long, ere the beamy badge of day arrive.

Or else, because in the way just mentioned at alternate parts of the year fires are accustomed to stream together more slowly and more quickly, which cause the sun to rise in a certain point, therefore it is that those appear to speak the truth [who suppose a fresh sun to be born every day.]

The moon may shine because struck by the sun's rays, and turn that light every day more and more directly towards our sight, in proportion as she

recedes from the sun's orb, until just opposite to him she has shone out with full light and at her rising as she soars aloft has beheld his setting; and then by slow steps reversing as it were her course she must in the same way hide her light, the nearer and nearer she now glides to the sun from a different quarter through the circle of the signs; according to the theory of those who suppose the moon to be like a ball and to hold on her course under the sun.

She may also very possibly revolve with her own light and display various phases of brightness; for there may well be another body which is carried on and glides in her company getting before her path and obstructing her in all manner of ways and yet cannot be seen, because it glides on without light.

She may also revolve, like it may be to a spherical ball steeped over one half in shining light, and as she rolls round this sphere she may present changing phases, until she has turned that half which is illuminated full towards our sight and open eyes; then by slow steps she whirls back and withdraws the light-fraught half of the spherical ball; as the Babylonian science of the Chaldees refuting the system of the astronomers essays to prove in opposition to them; just as though that which each party fights for might not be equally true, or there were any reason why you should venture to embrace the one theory less than the other.

Again, why a new moon should not be born every day after a regular succession of forms and regular phases, and each day the one which is born perish and another be produced in its room and stead, it is not easy to teach by reasoning or prove by words, since so many things can be born in such a regular succession.

[736] Spring and Venus go their way, and the winged harbinger of Venus steps on before; and close on Zephyr's footprints mother Flora straws all the way before them and covers it over with the choicest colors and odors.

Next in order follows parching heat, and in its company dusty Ceres and the etesian blasts of the north winds.

Next autumn advances and Euhius Euan steps on together.

Then other seasons and winds follow, loud-roaring Volturnus and the south wind stored with lightning.

At last midwinter brings with it snows and gives back benumbing cold; after it follows winter with teeth chattering with cold.

It is therefore the less strange that a moon is begotten at a fixed time and at a fixed time is destroyed again, since many things may take place at a time so surely fixed.

The eclipses of the sun likewise and the obscurations of the moon you may suppose to take place from many different causes.

For why should the moon be able to shut the earth out from the sun's light and on the earthward side put in his way her high exalted head, placing her dark orb before his burning rays; and yet at the same time it be thought that another body gliding on ever without light cannot do the same?

Why too should not the sun be able, quite exhausted, to lose his fires at a

fixed time, and again reproduce his light when in his journey through the air he has passed by spots fatal to his flames, which cause his fires to be quenched and to perish?

And why should the earth be able in turn to rob the moon of light and moreover herself to keep the sun suppressed, while in her monthly course she glides through the well-defined shadows of the cone; and yet at the same time another body not be able to pass under the moon or glide above the sun's orb, breaking off its rays and the light it sheds forth?

Yes, and if the moon shines with her own brightness, why should she not be able to grow faint in a certain part of the world, while she is passing through spots hostile to her own light?

And now further since I have explained in what way every thing might take place throughout the blue of the great heaven; how we might know what force and cause set in motion the varied courses of the sun and wanderings of the moon; and in what way their light might be intercepted and they be lost to us and spread darkness over the earth little expecting if when so to speak they close their eye of light and opening it again survey all places shining in bright radiance, I now go back to the infancy of the world and the tender age of the fields of earth and show what first in their early essays of production they resolved to raise into the borders of light and give in charge to the wayward winds.

[782] In the beginning the earth gave forth all kinds of herbage and verdant sheen about the hills and overall the plains; the flowery meadows glittered with the bright green hue, and next in order to the different trees was given a strong and emulous desire of growing up into the air with full unbridled powers.

As feathers and hairs and bristles are first born on the limbs of four-footed beasts and the body of the strong of wing, thus the new earth then first put forth grass and bushes, and next gave birth to the races of mortal creatures springing up many in number in many ways after divers fashions.

For no living creatures can have dropped from heaven nor can those belonging to the land have come out of the salt pools.

It follows that with good reason the earth has gotten the name of mother, since all things have been produced out of the earth.

And many living creatures even now spring out of the earth taking form by rains and the heat of the sun.

It is therefore the less strange if at that time they sprang up more in number and larger in size, having come to maturity in the freshness of earth and ether.

First of all the race of fowls and the various birds would leave their eggs, hatched in the springtime, just as now in summer the cicades leave spontaneously their gossamer coats in quest of a living and life.

Then you must know did the earth first give forth races of mortal men.

For much heat and moisture would then abound in the fields; and therefore wherever a suitable spot offered, wombs would grow attached to the earth by

roots; and when the warmth of the infants, flying the wet and craving the air, had opened these in the fulness of time, nature would turn to that spot the pores of the earth and constrain it to yield from its opened veins a liquid most like to milk, even as now-a-days every woman when she has borne, is filled with sweet milk, because all that current of nutriment streams towards the breasts.

To the children the earth would furnish food, the heat raiment, the grass a bed rich in abundance of soft down.

Then the fresh youth of the world would give forth neither severe colds nor excessive heats nor gales of great violence; [819] for all things grow and acquire strength in a like proportion.

Wherefore again and again I say the earth with good title has gotten and keeps the name of mother, since she of herself gave birth to mankind and at a time nearly fixed shed forth every beast that ranges wildly over the great mountains, and at the same time the fowls of the air with all their varied shapes.

But because she must have some limit set to her bearing, she ceased like a woman worn out by length of days.

For time changes the nature of the whole world and all things must pass on from one condition to another, and nothing continues like to itself: all things quit their bounds, all things nature changes and compels to alter.

One thing crumbles away and is worn and enfeebled with age, then another comes unto honor and issues out of its state of contempt.

In this way then time changes the nature of the whole world and the earth passes out of one condition into another: what once it could, it can bear no more, in order to be able to bear what before it did not bear.

And many monsters too the earth at that time essayed to produce, things coming up with strange face and limbs, the man-woman, a thing between the two and neither the one sex nor the other, widely differing from both; some things deprived of feet, others again destitute of hands, others too proving dumb without mouth, or blind without eyes, and things bound fast by the adhesion of their limbs overall the body, so that they could not do anything nor go anywhere nor avoid the evil nor take what their needs required.

Every other monster and portent of this kind she would produce, but all in vain, since nature set a ban on their increase and they could not reach the coveted flower of age nor find food nor be united in marriage.

For we see that many conditions must meet together in things in order that they may beget and continue their kinds; first a supply of food, then a way by which the birth-producing seeds throughout the frame may stream from the relaxed limbs; also in order that the woman may be united with the male, the possession of organs whereby they may each interchange mutual joys.

And many races of living things must then have died out and been unable to beget and continue their breed.

For in the case of all things which you see breathing the breath of life,

either craft or courage or else speed has from the beginning of its existence protected and preserved each particular race.

[860] And there are many things which, recommended to us by their useful services, continue to exist consigned to our protection.

In the first place the fierce breed of lions and the savage races their courage has protected, foxes their craft and stags their proneness to flight.

But light-sleeping dogs with faithful heart in breast and every kind which is born of the seed of beasts of burden and at the same time the woolly flocks and the horned herds are all consigned, Memmius, to the protection of man.

For they have ever fled with eagerness from wild beasts and have ensued peace and plenty of food obtained without their own labor, as we give it in requital of their useful services.

But those to whom nature has granted none of these qualities, so that they could neither live by their own means nor perform for us any useful service in return for which we should suffer their kind to feed and be safe under our protection, those, you are to know, would lie exposed as a prey and booty of others, hampered all in their own death-bringing shackles, until nature brought that kind to utter destruction.

But Centaurs never have existed, and at no time can there exist things of twofold nature and double body formed into one frame out of limbs of alien kinds, such that the faculties and powers of this and that portion cannot be sufficiently like.

This however dull of understanding you may learn from what follows:

To begin, a horse when three years have gone round is in the prime of his vigor, far different the boy: often even at that age he will call in his sleep for the milk of the breast.

Afterwards when in advanced age his lusty strength and limbs now faint with ebbing life fail the horse, then and not till then youth in the flower of age commences for that boy and clothes his cheeks in soft down; that you may not haply believe that out of a man and the burden-carrying seed of horses Centaurs can be formed and have being; or that Scyllas with bodies half those of fishes girdled round with raving dogs can exist, and all other things of the kind, whose limbs we see cannot harmonize together; as they neither come to their flower at the same time nor reach the fulness of their bodily strength nor lose it in advanced old age, nor burn with similar passions nor have compatible manners, nor feel the same things give pleasure throughout their frames.

[898] Thus we may see bearded goats often fatten on hemlock which for man is rank poison.

Since flame moreover is wont to scorch and burn the tawny bodies of lions just as much as any other kind of flesh and blood existing on earth, how could it be that a single chimera with triple body, in front a lion, behind a dragon, in the middle the goat whose name it bears, could breathe out at the mouth fierce flame from its body?

Wherefore also he who fables that in the new time of the earth and the fresh youth of heaven such living creatures could have been begotten, resting upon this one futile term new, may babble out many things in like fashion, may say that rivers then ran with gold over all parts of the earth and that trees were wont to blossom with precious stones, or that man was born with such giant force of frame that he could wade on foot across deep seas and whirl the whole heaven about him with his hands.

For the fact that there were many seeds of things in the earth what time it first shed forth living creatures, is yet no proof that there could have been produced beasts of different kinds mixed together, and limbs of different living things formed into a single frame, because the kinds of herbage and corn and joyous trees which even now spring in plenty out of the earth yet cannot be produced with the several sorts plaited into one, but each thing goes on after its own fashion, and all preserve their distinctive differences according to a fixed law of nature.

But the race of man then in the fields was much hardier, as beseemed it to be, since the hard earth had produced it; and built on a groundwork of larger and more solid bones within, knit with powerful sinews throughout the frame of flesh; not lightly to be disabled by heat or cold or strange kinds of food or any malady of body.

And during the revolution of many lusters of the sun through heaven they led a life after the roving fashion of wild beasts.

No one then was a sturdy guider of the bent plow or knew how to labor the fields with iron or plant in the ground young saplings or lop with pruning-hooks old boughs from the high trees.

What the sun and rains had given, what the earth had produced spontaneously, was guerdon sufficient to content their hearts.

Among acorn-bearing oaks they would refresh their bodies for the most part; [940] and the arbute-berries which you now see in the winter-time ripen with a bright scarlet hue, the earth would then bear in greatest plenty and of a larger size; and many coarse kinds of food besides the teeming freshness of the world then bare, more than enough for poor wretched men.

But rivers and springs invited to slake thirst, even as now a rush of water down from the great hills summons with clear plash far and wide the thirsty races of wild beasts.

Then too as they ranged about they would occupy the well-known woodland haunts of the nymphs, out of which they knew that smooth-gliding streams of water with a copious gush bathed the dripping rocks, the dripping rocks, trickling down over the green moss; and in parts welled and bubbled out over the level plain.

And as yet they knew not how to apply fire to their purposes or to make use of skins and clothe their body in the spoils of wild beasts, but they would dwell in woods and mountain-caves and forests and shelter in the brushwood their squalid limbs when driven to shun the buffeting of the winds and the

rains.

And they were unable to look to the general weal and knew not how to make a common use of any customs or laws.

Whatever prize fortune threw in his way, each man would bear off, trained at his own discretion to think of himself and live for himself alone.

And Venus would join the bodies of lovers in the woods; for each woman was gained over either by mutual desire or the headstrong violence and vehement lust of the man or a bribe of some acorns and arbuter-berries or choice pears.

And trusting to the marvelous powers of their hands and feet they would pursue the forest-haunting races of wild beasts with showers of stones and club of ponderous weight; and many they would conquer, a few they would avoid in hiding-places; and like to bristly swine just as they were they would throw their savage limbs all naked on the ground, when overtaken by night, covering themselves up with leaves and boughs.

Yet never with loud wailings would they call for the daylight and the sun, wandering terror-stricken over the fields in the shadows of night, but silent and buried in sleep they would wait, till the sun with rosy torch carried light into heaven; for accustomed as they had been from childhood always to see darkness and light begotten time about, never could any wonder come over them, nor any misgiving that never-ending night would cover the earth and the light of the sun be withdrawn for evermore.

[983] But what gave them trouble was rather the races of wild beasts which would often render repose fatal to the poor wretches.

And driven from their home they would fly from their rocky shelters on the approach of a foaming bear or a strong lion, and in the dead of night they would surrender in terror to their savage guests their sleeping-places strewn with leaves.

Nor then much more than now would the races of mortal men leave the sweet light of ebbing life.

For then this one or that other one of them would be more likely to be seized, and torn open by their teeth would furnish to the wild beasts a living food, and would fill with his moaning woods and mountains and forests as he looked on his living flesh buried in a living grave.

But those whom flight had saved with body eaten into, holding ever after their quivering palms over the noisome sores would summon death with appalling cries, until cruel gripings had rid them of life, forlorn of help, unwitting what wounds wanted.

But then a single day gave not over to death many thousands of men marching with banners spread, nor did the stormy waters of the sea dash on the rocks men and ships.

At this time the sea would often rise up and rage without aim, without purpose, without result, and just as lightly put off its empty threats; nor could the winning wiles of the calm sea treacherously entice any one to his ruin with

laughing waters, when the reckless craft of the skipper had not yet risen into the light.

Then too want of food would consign to death their fainting frames, now on the contrary 'tis plenty sinks into ruin.

They unwittingly would often pour out poison for themselves; now with nicer skill men give it to their son's wife instead.

Next after they had got themselves huts and skins and fire, and the woman united with the man passed with him into one [domicile and the duties of wedlock were] learnt [by the two], and they saw an offspring born from them, then first mankind began to soften.

For fire made their chilled bodies less able now to bear the frost beneath the canopy of heaven, and Venus impaired their strength and children with their caresses soon broke down the haughty temper of parents.

Then too neighbors began to join in a league of friendship mutually desiring neither to do nor suffer harm; ^[1021] and asked for indulgence to children and womankind, when with cries and gestures they declared in stammering speech that meet it is for all to have mercy on the weak.

And though harmony could not be established without exception, yet a very large portion observed their agreements with good faith, or else the race of man would then have been wholly cut off, nor could breeding have continued their generations to this day.

But nature impelled them to utter the various sounds of the tongue and use struck out the names of things, much in the same way as the inability to speak is seen in its turn to drive children to the use of gestures, when it forces them to point with the finger at the things which are before them.

For everyone feels how far he can make use of his peculiar powers.

Ere the horns of a calf are formed and project from his forehead, he butts with it when angry and pushes out in his rage.

Then whelps of panthers and cubs of lions fight with claws and feet and teeth at a time when teeth and claws are hardly yet formed.

Again we see every kind of fowl trust to wings and seek from pinions a fluttering succor.

Therefore to suppose that some one man at that time apportioned names to things and that men from him learnt their first words, is sheer folly.

For why should this particular man be able to denote all things bywords and to utter the various sounds of the tongue, and yet at the same time others be supposed not to have been able to do so?

Again if others as well as he had not made use of words among themselves, whence was implanted in this man the previous conception of its use and whence was given to him the original faculty, to know and perceive in mind what he wanted to do?

Again one man could not constrain and subdue and force many to choose to learn the names of things.

It is no easy thing in anyway to teach and convince the deaf of what is

needful to be done; for they never would suffer nor in anyway endure sounds of voice hitherto unheard to continue to be dinned fruitlessly into their ears.

Lastly what is there so passing strange in this circumstance, that the race of men whose voice and tongue were in full force, should denote things by different words as different feelings prompted?

Since dumb brutes, yes and the races of wild beasts are accustomed to give forth distinct and varied sounds, when they have fear or pain and when joys are rife.

[1062] This you may learn from facts plain to sense: when the large spongy open lips of Molossian dogs begin to growl enraged and bare their hard teeth, thus drawn back in rage they threaten in a tone far different from that in which they bark outright and fill with sounds all the places round.

Again when they essay fondly to lick their whelps with their tongue or when they toss them with their feet and snapping at them make a feint with lightly closing teeth of swallowing though with gentle forbearance, they caress them with a yelping sound of a sort greatly differing from that which they utter when left alone in a house they bay or when they slink away howling from blows with a crouching body.

Again is not the neigh too seen to differ, when a young stallion in the flower of age rages among the mares smitten by the goads of winged love, and when with wide-stretched nostrils he snorts out the signal to arms, and when as it chances on any occasion he neighs with limbs all shaking?

Lastly, the race of fowls and various birds, hawks and ospreys and gulls seeking their living in the salt water mid the waves of the sea, utter at a different time noises widely different from those they make when they are fighting for food and struggling with their prey.

And some of them change together with the weather their harsh croakings, as the long-lived races of crows and flocks of rooks when they are said to be calling for water and rain and sometimes to be summoning winds and gales.

Therefore if different sensations compel creatures, dumb though they be, to utter different sounds, how much more natural it is that mortal men in those times should have been able to denote dissimilar things by many different words!

And lest haply on this head you ask in silent thought this question, it was lightning that brought fire down on earth for mortals in the beginning; thence the whole heat of flames is spread abroad.

Thus we see many things shine dyed in heavenly flames when the stroke from heaven has stored them with its heat.

Ay and without this when a branching tree sways to and fro and tosses about under the buffeting of the winds, pressing against the boughs of another tree, fire is forced out by the power of the violent friction, and sometimes the burning heat of flame flashes out, the boughs and stems rubbing against each other.

[1101] Now either of these accidents may have given fire to men.

Next the sun taught them to cook food and soften it with the heat of flame, since they would see many things grow mellow when subdued by the strokes of the rays and by heat throughout the land.

And more and more every day men who excelled in intellect and were of vigorous understanding would kindly show them how to exchange their former way of living for new methods.

Kings began to build towns and lay out a citadel as a place of strength and of refuge for themselves, and divided cattle and lands and gave to each man in proportion to his personal beauty and strength and intellect; for beauty and vigorous strength were much esteemed.

Afterwards wealth was discovered and gold found out, which soon robbed of their honors strong and beautiful alike; for men however valiant and beautiful of person generally follow in the train of the richer man.

But were a man to order his life by the rules of true reason, a frugal subsistence joined to a contented mind is for him great riches; for never is there any lack of a little.

But men desired to be famous and powerful, in order that their fortunes might rest on a firm foundation and they might be able by their wealth to lead a tranquil life; but in vain, since in their struggle to mount up to the highest dignities they rendered their path one full of danger; and even if they reach it, yet envy like a thunderbolt sometimes strikes and dashes men down from the highest point with ignominy into noisome Tartarus; since the highest summits and those elevated above the level of other things are mostly blasted by envy as by a thunderbolt; so that far better it is to obey in peace and quiet than to wish to rule with power supreme and be the master of kingdoms.

Therefore let men wear themselves out to no purpose and sweat drops of blood, as they struggle on along the strait road of ambition, since they gather their knowledge from the mouths of others and follow after things from hearsay rather than the dictates of their own feelings; and this prevails not now nor will prevail by and bye anymore than it has prevailed before.

Kings therefore being slain the old majesty of thrones and proud scepters were overthrown and laid in the dust, and the glorious badge of the sovereign head bloodstained beneath the feet of the rabble mourned for its high prerogative; for that is greedily trampled on which before was too much dreaded.

It would come then in the end to the lees of uttermost disorder, each man seeking for himself empire and sovereignty.

[1142] Next a portion of them taught men to elect legal officers, and drew up codes, to induce men to obey the laws.

For mankind, tired out with a life of brute force, lay exhausted from its feuds; and therefore the more readily it submitted of its own freewill to laws and stringent codes.

For as each one moved by anger took measures to avenge himself with more severity than is now permitted by equitable laws, for this reason men

grew sick of a life of brute force.

Thence fear of punishment mars the prizes of life; for violence and wrong enclose all who commit them in their meshes and do mostly recoil on him from whom they began; and it is not easy for him who by his deeds transgresses the terms of the public peace to pass a tranquil and a peaceful existence.

For though he eludes God and man, yet he cannot but feel a misgiving that his secret can be kept for ever; seeing that many by speaking in their dreams or in the wanderings of disease have often we are told betrayed themselves and have disclosed their hidden deeds of evil and their sins.

And now what cause has spread over great nations the worship of the divinities of the gods and filled towns with altars and led to the performance of stated sacred rites, rites now in fashion on solemn occasions and in solemn places, from which even now, is implanted in mortals a shuddering awe which raises new temples of the gods over the whole earth and prompts men to crowd them on festive days, all this it is not so difficult to explain in words.

Even then in sooth the races of mortal men would see in waking mind glorious forms, would see them in sleep of yet more marvelous size of body.

To these then they would attribute sense, because they seemed to move their limbs and to utter lofty words suitable to their glorious aspect and surpassing powers.

And they would give them life everlasting, because their face would ever appear before them and their form abide; yes and yet without all this, because they would not believe that beings possessed of such powers could lightly be overcome by any force.

And they would believe them to be preeminent in bliss, because none of them was ever troubled with the fear of death, and because at the same time in sleep they would see them perform many miracles, yet feel on their part no fatigue from the effort.

[1183] Again they would see the system of heaven and the different seasons of the years come round in regular succession, and could not find out by what causes this was done; therefore they would seek a refuge in handing over all things to the gods and supposing all things to be guided by their nod.

And they placed in heaven the abodes and realms of the gods, because night and moon are seen to roll through heaven, moon day and night and night's austere constellations and night-wandering meteors of the sky and flying bodies of flame, clouds, sun, rains, snow, winds, lightnings, hail, and rapid rumblings and loud threatening thunderclaps.

O hapless race of men, when that they charged the gods with such acts and coupled with them bitter wrath!

What groanings did they then beget for themselves, what wounds for us, what tears for our children's children!

No act is it of piety to be often seen with veiled head to turn to a stone and approach every altar and fall prostrate on the ground and spread out the palms

before the statues of the gods and sprinkle the altars with much blood of beasts and link vow on to vow, but rather to be able to look on all things with a mind at peace.

For when we turn our gaze on the heavenly quarters of the great upper world and ether fast above the glittering stars, and direct our thoughts to the courses of the sun and moon, then into our breasts burdened with other ills that fear as well begins to exalt its reawakened head, the fear that we may haply find the power of the gods to be unlimited, able to wheel the bright stars in their varied motion; for lack of power to solve the question troubles the mind with doubts, whether there was ever a birth-time of the world, and whether likewise there is to be any end; how far the walls of the world can endure this strain of restless motion; or whether gifted by the grace of the gods with an everlasting existence they may glide on through a never-ending tract of time and defy the strong powers of immeasurable ages.

Again, who is there whose mind does not shrink into itself with fear of the gods, whose limbs do not cower in terror, when the parched earth rocks with the appalling thunder stroke and rattlings run through the great heaven?

Do not peoples and nations quake, and proud monarchs shrink into themselves smitten with fear of the gods, lest for any foul transgression or overweening word the heavy time of reckoning has arrived at its fulness?

When too the utmost fury of the headstrong wind passes over the sea and sweeps over its waters the commander of a fleet together with his mighty legions and elephants, does he not draw near with vows to seek the mercy of the gods and ask in prayer with fear and trembling a lull in the winds and propitious gales; ^[1230] but all in vain, since often caught up in the furious hurricane he is borne nonetheless to the shoals of death?

So constantly does some hidden power trample on human grandeur and is seen to tread under its heel and make sport for itself of the renowned rods and cruel axes.

Again, when the whole earth rocks under their feet and towns tumble with the shock or doubtfully threaten to fall, what wonder that mortal men abase themselves and make over to the gods in things hereon earth high prerogatives and marvelous powers, sufficient to govern all things?

To proceed, copper and gold and iron were discovered and at the same time weighty silver and the substance of lead, when fire with its heat had burnt up vast forests on the great hills, either by a discharge of heaven's lightning, or else because men waging with one another a forest-war had carried fire among the enemy in order to strike terror, or because drawn on by the goodness of the soil they would wish to clear rich fields and bring the country into pasture, or else to destroy wild beasts and enrich themselves with the booty; for hunting with the pitfall and with fire came into use before the practice of enclosing the lawn with toils and stirring it with dogs.

Whatever the fact is, from whatever cause the heat of flame had swallowed up the forests with a frightful crackling from their very roots and had

thoroughly baked the earth with fire, there would run from the boiling veins and collect into the hollows of the ground a stream of silver and gold, as well as of copper and lead.

And when they saw these afterwards cool into lumps and glitter on the earth with a brilliant gleam, they would lift them up attracted by the bright and polished luster, and they would see them to be molded in a shape the same as the outline of the cavities in which each lay.

Then it would strike them that these might be melted by heat and cast in any form or shape soever, and might by hammering out be brought to tapering points of any degree of sharpness and fineness, so as to furnish them with tools and enable them to cut the forests and hew timber and plane smooth the planks, and also to drill and pierce and bore.

[1269] And they would set about these works just as much with silver and gold at first as with the overpowering strength of stout copper, but in vain, since their force would fail and give way and not be able like copper to stand the severe strain.

At that time copper was in higher esteem and gold would lie neglected on account of its uselessness, with its dull blunted edge: now copper lies neglected, gold has mounted up to the highest place of honor.

Thus time as it goes round changes the seasons of things.

That which was in esteem falls at length into utter disrepute; and then another thing mounts up and issues out of its degraded state and every day is more and more coveted and blossoms forth high in honor when discovered and is in marvelous repute with men.

And now, Memmius, it is easy for you to find out by yourself in what way the nature of iron was discovered.

Arms of old were hands nails and teeth and stones and boughs broken off from the forests, and flame and fire, as soon as they had become known.

Afterwards the force of iron and copper was discovered; and the use of copper was known before that of iron, as its nature is easier to work and it is found in greater quantity.

With copper they would labor the soil of the earth, with copper stir up the billows of war and deal about wide-gaping wounds and seize cattle and lands; for every thing defenseless and unarmed would readily yield to them with arms in hand.

Then by slow steps the sword of iron gained ground and the make of the copper sickle became a byword; and with iron they began to plow through the earth's soil, and the struggles of wavering war were rendered equal.

And the custom of mounting in arms on the back of a horse and guiding him with reins and showing prowess with the right hand is older than that of tempting the risks of war in a two-horsed chariot; and yoking a pair of horses is older than yoking four or mounting in arms scythed chariots.

Next the Poeni taught the lucan kine with towered body, hideous of aspect, with snake-like hand, to endure the wounds of war and to disorder the mighty

ranks of Mars.

Thus sad discord begat one thing after another, to affright nations of men under arms, and every day made some addition to the terrors of war.

They made trial of bulls too in the service of war and essayed to send savage boars against the enemy.

[1310] And some sent before them valorous lions with armed trainers and courageous keepers to guide them and to hold them in chains; but in vain, since heated with promiscuous slaughter they would disorder in their rage the troops without distinction, shaking all about the frightful crests upon their heads; and the horsemen were not able to calm the breasts of the horses scared by the roaring and turn them with the bridle upon the enemy.

The lionesses with a spring would throw their enraged bodies on all sides and would attack in the face those who met them, and others off their guard they would tear down from behind and twining round them would bring them to the ground overpowered by the wound, fastening on them with firm bite and with hooked claws.

The bulls would toss their own friends and trample them under foot, and gore with their horns the flanks and bellies of the horses underneath and turn up the earth with threatening front.

The boars too would rend their friends with powerful tusks, in their rage dying with their blood the weapons broken in them, ay dying with their blood the weapons broken in their own bodies; and would put to promiscuous rout horse and foot; for the tame beasts would try to avoid by shying to the side the cruel push of the tusk, or would rear up and paw the winds, all in vain, since you might see them tumble down with their tendons severed and straw the in their heavy fall.

Those whom they believed before to have been sufficiently broken in at home, they would see lash themselves into fury in the heat of action from wounds and shouting, flight panic and uproar; and they could not rally any portion of them; for all the different kinds of wild beasts would fly all abroad; just as now the lucan kine when cruelly mangled by the steel fly often all abroad, after inflicting on their friends many cruel sufferings.

But men chose thus to act not so much in any hope of victory, as from a wish to give the enemy something to rue at the cost of their own lives, when they mistrusted their numbers and were in want of arms.

A garment tied on the body was in use before a dress of woven stuff.

Woven stuff comes after iron, because iron is needed for weaving a web; and in no other way can such finely polished things be made as heddles and spindles, shuttles and ringing yarn-beams.

And nature impelled men to work up the wool before womankind: [1355] for the male sex in general far excels the other in skill and is much more ingenious: until the rugged countrymen so upbraided them with it, that they were glad to give it over into the hands of the women and take their share in supporting hard toil, and in such hard work hardened body and hands.

But nature parent of things was herself the first model of sowing and first gave rise to grafting, since berries and acorns dropping from the trees would put forth in due season swarms of young shoots underneath; and hence also came the fashion of inserting grafts in their stocks and planting in the ground young saplings over the fields.

Next they would try another and yet another kind of tillage for their loved piece of land and would see the earth better the wild fruits through genial fostering and kindly cultivation.

And they would force the forests to recede every day higher and higher up the hill-side and yield, the ground below to tilth, in order to have on the uplands and plains meadows tanks runnels cornfields and glad vineyards, and allow a grey-green strip of olives to run between and mark the divisions, spreading itself over hillocks and valleys and plains; just as you now see richly dight with varied beauty all the ground which they lay out and plant with rows of sweet fruit-trees and enclose all round with plantations of other goodly trees.

But imitating with the mouth the clear notes of birds was in use long before men were able to sing in tune smooth-running verses and give pleasure to the ear.

And the whistlings of the zephyr through the hollows of reeds first taught peasants to blow into hollow stalks.

Then step by step they learned sweet plaintive ditties, which the pipe pours forth pressed by the fingers of the players, heard through pathless woods and forests and lawns, through the unfrequented haunts of shepherds and abodes of unearthly calm.

These things would soothe and gratify their minds when sated with food; for then all things of this kind are welcome.

Often therefore stretched in groups on the soft grass beside a stream of water under the boughs of a high tree at no great cost they would pleasantly refresh their bodies, above all when 'the weather smiled and the seasons of the year painted the green grass with flowers.

Then went round the jest, the tale, the peals of merry laughter; for the peasant muse was then in its glory; then frolick mirth would prompt to entwine head and shoulders with garlands plaited with flowers and leaves, and to advance in the dance out of step and move the limbs clumsily and with clumsy foot beat mother earth; [1401] which would occasion smiles and peals of merry laughter, because all these things then from their greater novelty and strangeness were in high repute.

And the wakeful found a solace for want of sleep in this, in drawing out a variety of notes and going through tunes and running over the reeds with curving lip; whence even at the present day watchmen observe these traditions and have lately learned to keep the proper tune; and yet for all this receive not a jot more of enjoyment, than erst the rugged race of sons of earth received.

For that which we have in our hands, if we have known before nothing

pleasanter, pleases above all and is thought to be the best; and as a rule the later discovery of something better spoils the taste for the former things and changes the feelings in regard to all that has gone before.

Thus began distaste for the acorn, thus were abandoned those sleeping-places strewn with grass and enriched with leaves.

The dress too of wild beasts' skin fell into neglect; though I can fancy that in those days it was found to arouse such jealousy that he who first wore it met his death by an ambuscade, and after all it was tom in pieces among them and drenched in blood was utterly destroyed and could not be turned to any use.

In those times therefore skins, now gold and purple plague men's lives with cares and wear them out with war.

And in this methinks the greater blame rests with us; for cold would torture the naked sons of earth without, but us it harms not in the least to do without a robe of purple, spangled with gold and large figures, if only we have a dress of the people to protect us.

Mankind therefore ever toils vainly and to no purpose and wastes life in groundless cares because sure enough they have not learnt what is the true end of getting and up to what point genuine pleasure goes on increasing: this by slow degrees has carried life out into the deep sea and stirred up from their lowest depths the mighty billows of war.

But those watchful guardians sun and moon traversing with their light all round the great revolving sphere of heaven taught men that the seasons of the year came round and that the system was carried on after a fixed plan and fixed order.

[1440] Already they would pass their life fenced about with strong towers, and the land, portioned out and marked off by boundaries, be tilled; the sea would be filled with ships scudding under sail; towns have auxiliaries and allies as stipulated by treaty, when poets began to consign the deeds of men to verse; and letters had not been invented long before.

For this reason our age cannot look back to what has gone before save where reason points out any traces.

Ships and tillage, walls, laws, arms, roads, dress, and all such like things, all the prizes, all the elegancies too of life without exception, poems, pictures, and the chiseling of fine-wrought statues, all these things practice together with the acquired knowledge of the untiring mind taught men by slow degrees as they advanced on the way step by step.

Thus time by degrees brings each several thing forth before men's eyes and reason raises it up into the borders of light; for things must be brought to light one after the other and in due order in the different arts until these have reached their highest point of development.

BOOK VI.

[1] IN days of yore Athens of famous name first imparted corn-producing crops to suffering mankind, and modeled life anew and passed laws; and first too bestowed sweet solaces of existence, when she gave birth to a man who showed himself gifted with such a genius and poured forth all knowledge of old from his truth-telling mouth; whose glory, even now that he is dead, on account of his godlike discoveries confirmed by length of time is spread abroad among men and reaches high as heaven.

For when he saw that the things which their needs imperiously demand for subsistence had all without exception been already provided for men, and that life, so far as was possible, was placed on a sure footing, that men were great in affluence of riches and honors and glory and swelled with pride in the high reputation of their children, and yet that none of them at home for all that had a heart the less disquieted, and that this heart in despite of the understanding plagued life without any respite and was constrained to rave with distressful complainings, he then perceived that the vessel itself did cause the corruption and that by its corruption all the things that came into it and were gathered from abroad, however salutary were spoilt within it; partly because he saw it to be leaky and full of holes so that it could never by any means be filled full; partly because he perceived that it befouled so to say with a nauseous flavor everything within it which it had taken in.

He therefore cleansed men's breasts with truth-telling precepts and fixed a limit to lust and fear and explained what was the chief good which we all strive to reach, and pointed out the road along which by a short cross-track we might arrive at it in a straightforward course; [28] he showed too what evils existed in mortal affairs throughout, rising up and manifoldly flying about by a natural –call it chance or force, because nature had so brought it about – and from what gates you must sally out duly to encounter each; and he proved that mankind mostly without cause arouse in their breast the melancholy tumbling billows of cares.

For even as children are flurried and dread all things in the thick darkness, thus we in the daylight fear at times things not a whit more to be dreaded than what children shudder at in the dark and fancy sure to be.

This terror therefore and darkness of mind must be dispelled, not by the rays of the sun and glittering shafts of day, but by the aspect and law of nature.

Wherefore the more readily I will go on in my verses to complete the web of my design.

And since I have shown that the quarters of ether are mortal and that heaven is formed of a body that had a birth, and since of all the things which go on and must go on in it, I have unraveled most, hear further what remains to be told; since once for all [I have willed] to mount the illustrious chariot [of

the muses, and ascending to heaven to explain the true law of winds and storms, which men foolishly lay to the charge of the gods, telling how, when they are angry, they raise fierce tempests; and, when there is a lull in the fury] of the winds, how that anger is appeased, how the omens which have been are again changed, when their fury has thus been appeased: [I have willed at the same time] to explain all the other things which mortals observe to go on upon earth and in heaven, when often they are in anxious suspense of mind, and which abase their souls with fear of the gods and weigh and press them down to earth, because ignorance of the causes constrains them to submit things to the empire of the gods and to make over to them the kingdom.

For they who have been rightly taught that the gods lead a life without care, if nevertheless they wonder on what plan all things can be carried on, above all in regard to those things which are seen overhead in the ethereal borders, are borne back again into their old religious scruples and take unto themselves hard taskmasters, whom they poor wretches believe to be almighty, not knowing what can, what cannot be, in short on what principle each thing has its powers defined, its deep set boundary mark; and therefore they are led all the farther astray by blind reason.

[68] Now unless you drive from your mind with loathing all these things, and banish far from you all belief in things degrading to the gods and inconsistent with their peace, then often will the holy deities of the gods, having their majesty lessened by you, do you hurt; not that the supreme power of the gods can be so outraged that in their wrath they shall resolve to exact sharp vengeance, but because you will fancy to yourself that they, though they enjoy quiet and calm peace, do roll great billows of wrath; nor will you approach the sanctuaries of the gods with a calm breast, nor will you be able with tranquil peace of mind to take in those idols which are carried from their holy body into the minds of men as heralds of their divine form.

And what kind of life follows after this, may be conceived.

But in order that most veracious reason may drive it far away from us, though much has already gone forth from me, much however still remains and has to be embellished in smooth-polished verses; the law and aspect of heaven have to be grasped; storms and bright lightnings, what they do and from what cause they are borne along, all this has to be sung; that you may not mark out the heaven into quarters and be startled and distracted on seeing from which of them the volant fire has come or to which of the two halves it has betaken itself, in what way it has gained an entrance within walled places, and how after lording it with tyrant sway, it has gotten itself out from these.

Do thou, deft muse Calliope, solace of men and joy of gods, point out the course before me as I race to the white boundary-line of the final goal, that under thy guidance I may win the crown with signal applause.

In the first place the blue of heaven is shaken with thunder because the ethereal clouds clash together as they fly aloft when the winds combat from opposite quarters.

For no sound ever comes from a cloudless part of heaven, but wheresoever the clouds are gathered in a denser mass, from that part with greater frequency comes a clap with a loud growl.

Again, clouds cannot be either of so dense a body as stones and timbers, nor again so fine as mists and flying bodies of smoke; for then they must either fall borne down by their dead weight like stones, or like smoke they would be unable to keep together and hold within frozen snows and hail showers.

They also give forth a sound over the levels of the wide-stretching upper world, just as at times a canvas-awning stretched over large theaters makes a creaking noise, when it tosses about among the poles and beams; [110] sometimes too rent by the boisterous gales it madly howls and closely imitates the rasping noise of pieces of paper: for this kind of noise too you may observe in thunder: you may observe again the sound which is heard when the winds whirl about with their blows and buffet through the air either a hanging cloth or flying bits of paper.

For sometimes the clouds cannot meet front to front indirect collision, but must rather move from the flank and so with contrary motions graze leisurely along each other's bodies; whence comes that dry sound which brushes the ears and is long drawn out, until they have made their way out of their confined positions.

In this way also all things appear to quake often from the shock of heavy thunder, and the mighty walls of the far stretching ether seem in an instant to have been riven and to have sprung asunder; when a storm of violent wind has suddenly gathered and worked itself into the clouds and, there shut in, with its whirling eddy ever more and more on all sides forces the cloud to become hollow with a thick surrounding crust of body; afterwards when its force and impetuous onset have split it, then the cloud thus rent gives forth a crash with a frightful hurtling noise.

And no wonder, when a small bladder filled with air often emits a hideous sound if suddenly burst.

It can also be explained how the winds, when they blow through the clouds, make noises: we see branching and rough clouds often borne along in many ways; thus, you are to know, when the blasts of the northwest blow through a dense forest, the leaves give forth a rustling and the boughs a crashing.

Sometimes too the force of the strong wind in rapid motion rends the cloud, breaking through it by an assault right in front: what a blast of wind can do there, is shown by facts plain to sense, when hereon earth where it is gentler it yet twists out tall trees and tears them up from their deepest roots.

There are also waves among the clouds and they give a kind of roar as they break heavily; just as in deep rivers and on the great sea when the surf breaks.

Sometimes too when the burning force of thunder has fallen out of one cloud into another, if haply the latter contains much moisture when it has

taken the fire into it, it drowns it at once with a loud noise; [148] just so iron glowing hot from the fiery furnaces sometimes hisses when we have plunged it quickly into cold water.

Again if the cloud which receives the fire is drier, it is set on fire in an instant and burns with a loud noise; just as if a flame should range over the laurel-covered hills through a whirlwind and burn them up with its impetuous assault; and there is not anything that burns in the crackling flame with a more startling sound than the Delphic laurel of Phoebus.

Then often too much crashing of ice and tumbling in of hail make a noise in the great clouds on high; for when the wind packs them together into a confined space, the mountains of storm-clouds congealed and mixed with hail break up.

It lightens too, when the clouds have struck out by their collision many seeds of fire; just as if a stone were to strike another stone or a piece of iron; for then too light bursts out and fire scatters about bright sparks.

But we hear the thunder with our ears after the eyes see the flash of lightning, because things always travel more slowly to the ears than those which excite vision travel to the eyes.

This you may perceive from the following instance as well: when you see a man at a distance cutting with a double-edged axe a large tree, you perceive the stroke before the blow carries the sound to the ear: thus we see lightning too before we hear the thunder, which is discharged at the same time as the fire from the same cause, being born indeed from the same collision.

Also in the following manner clouds dye places with winged light and the storm flashes out with a rapid quivering movement.

When the wind has made its way into a cloud and whirling about in it has, as I have shown above, made the cloud hollow with a dense crust, it becomes hot by its own velocity: thus you see all things thoroughly heated and fired by motion; nay a leaden ball in whirling through along course even melts.

When therefore this wind now on fire has rent the black cloud, it scatters abroad at once seeds of fire pressed out by force so to speak, and these produce the throbbing flashes of flame; then follows a sound which strikes on the ears more slowly than the things which travel to our eyes strike on them.

This you are to know takes place when the clouds are dense and at the same time piled up on high one above the other in marvelous accumulation; [186] that you be not led into error, because we see how great their breadth is below, rather than to how great a height they are piled up.

Observe, at a time when the winds shall carry clouds like to mountains with a slanting course through the air, or when you shall see them piled on the sides of great mountains one on the top of the other and pressing down from above perfectly at rest, the winds being buried on all sides.

You will then be able to observe their great masses and to see caverns as it were built of hanging rocks; and when a storm has gathered and the winds have filled these, they chafe with aloud roaring shut up in the clouds, and

bluster in their dens after the fashion of wild beasts: now from this point, now from that the winds send their growlings through the clouds, and seeking a way outwhirl about and roll together seeds of fire out of the clouds and then gather many into a mass and make flame rotate in the hollow furnaces within, until they have burst the cloud and shone forth in forked flashes.

From this cause again yon golden color of clear bright fire flies down with velocity to the earth: the clouds must themselves have very many seeds of fire; for when they are without any moisture, they are mostly of a brilliant flame color.

Moreover they must take in many from the sun's light, so that with good cause they are ruddy and shed forth fires.

When therefore the wind has driven thrust squeezed together and collected into one spot these clouds, they press out and shed forth seeds which cause the colors of flame to flash out.

It also lightens when the clouds of heaven are rarefied as well.

For when the wind lightly unravels them and breaks them up as they move, those seeds which produce the lightning must fall perforce; and then it lightens without a hideous startling noise and without any uproar.

Well, to proceed, what kind of nature thunderbolts possess, is shown by their strokes and the traces of their heat which have burnt themselves into things and the marks which exhale the noxious vapors of sulfur: all these are signs of fire, not of wind or rain.

Again they often set on fire even the roofs of houses and with swift flame rule resistless within the house.

This fire subtle above all fires nature, you are to know, forms of minute and lightly moving bodies, and it is such as nothing whatever can withstand.

[228] The mighty thunderbolt passes through the walls of houses, like a shout and voices, passes through stones, through brass, and in a moment of time melts brass and gold; and causes wine too in an instant to disappear, while the vessels are untouched, because sure enough its heat on reaching it readily loosens and rarefies all the earthen material of the vessel on every side and forcing a way within lightly separates and disperses the first-beginnings of the wine.

This the sun's heat would be unable to accomplish in an age, though beating on it incessantly with its quivering heat: so much more nimble and overpowering is this other force.

And now in what way these are begotten and are formed with a force so resistless as to be able with their stroke to burst asunder towers, throw down houses, wrench away beams and rafters, and cast down and burn up the monuments of men, to strike men dead, prostrate cattle far and near, by what force they can do all this and the like, I will make clear and will not longer detain you with mere professions.

Thunderbolts we must suppose to be begotten out of dense clouds piled up high; for they are never sent forth at all when the sky is clear or when the

clouds are of a slight density.

That this is so beyond all question is proved by facts evident to sense: clouds at such times form so dense a mass over the whole sky that we might imagine all its darkness had abandoned Acheron throughout and filled up the great vaults of heaven: in such numbers, gathering up out of the frightful night of storm clouds, do faces of black horror hang over us on high; what time the storm begins to forge its thunderbolts.

Very often again a black storm-cloud too out at sea, like a stream of pitch sent down from heaven, falls in such wise upon the waters heavily charged with darkness afar off and draws down a black tempest big with lightnings and storms, itself so fraught above all the rest with fires and winds, that even on land men shudder and seek shelter.

Thus then we must suppose that the storm above our head reaches high up; for the clouds would never bury the earth in such thick darkness, unless they were built up high heap upon heap, the sunlight totally disappearing; nor could the clouds when they descend drown it with so great a rain, as to make rivers overflow and put fields under water, if they were not piled high up in the sky.

In this case then all things are filled with winds and fire; therefore thunderings and lightnings go on all about.

[271] For I have shown above that hollow clouds have very many seeds of heat, and they must also take many in from the sun's rays and their heat.

On this account when the same wind which happens to collect them into any one place, has forced out many seeds of heat and has mixed itself up with that fire, then the eddy of wind forces a way in and whirls about in the straitened room and points the thunderbolt in the fiery furnaces within; for it is kindled in two ways at once: it is heated by its own velocity and from the contact of fire.

After that when the force of the wind has been thoroughly heated and the impetuous power of the fire has entered in, then the thunderbolt fully forged as it were suddenly rends the cloud, and the heat put in motion is carried on traversing all places with flashing lights.

Close upon it falls so heavy a clap that it seems to crush down from above the quarters of heaven which have all at once sprung asunder.

Then a trembling violently seizes the earth and rumblings run through high heaven; for the whole body of the storm then without exception quakes with the shock and loud roarings are aroused.

After this shock follows so heavy and copious a rain that the whole ether seems to be turning into rain and then to be tumbling down and returning to a deluge: so great a flood of it is discharged by the bursting of the cloud and the storm of wind, when the sound flies forth from the burning stroke.

At times too the force of the wind set in motion from without falls on a cloud hot with a fully forged thunderbolt; and when it has burst it, forthwith there falls down yon fiery eddying whirl which in our native speech we call a

thunderbolt.

The same takes place on every other side towards which the force in question has borne down.

Sometimes too the power of the wind though discharged without fire, yet catches fire in the course of its long travel, and while it is passing on, it loses on the way some large bodies which cannot like the rest get through the air; and gathers together out of the air itself and carries along with it other bodies of very small size which mix with it and produce fire by their flight; very much in the same way as a leaden ball becomes hot during its course, when it loses many bodies of cold and has taken up fire in the air.

Sometimes too the force of the blow itself strikes out fire, when the force of wind discharged in a cold state without fire has struck, because sure enough, when it has smitten with a powerful stroke, the elements of heat are able to stream together out of the wind itself and at the same time out of the thing which then encounters the stroke.

[313] Thus, when we strike a stone with iron, fire flies out; and none the less, because the force of the iron is cold, do its seeds of fiery brightness meet together upon the stroke.

Therefore in the same way too a thing ought to beset on fire by the thunderbolt, if it has happened to be in a state suited to receive and susceptible of the flames.

At the same time the might of the wind cannot lightly be thought to be absolutely and decidedly cold, seeing that it is discharged with such force from above; but if it is not already set on fire during its course, it yet arrives in a warm state with heat mixed up in it.

But the velocity of thunderbolts is great and their stroke powerful, and they run through their course with a rapid descent, because their force when set in motion first in all cases collects itself in the clouds and gathers itself up for a great effort at starting; then when the cloud is no longer able to hold the increased moving power, their force is pressed out and therefore flies with a marvelous moving power, like to that with which missiles are carried when discharged from powerful engines.

Then too the thunderbolt consists of small and smooth elements, and such a nature it is not easy for anything to withstand; for it flies between and passes in through the porous passages; therefore it is not checked and delayed by many collisions, and for this reason it glides and flies on with a swift moving power.

Next, all weights without exception naturally pressing downward, when to this a blow is added, the velocity is doubled and yon moving power becomes so intense that the thunderbolt dashes aside more impetuously and swiftly whatever gets in its way and tries to hinder it, and pursues its journey.

Then too as it advances with a long-continued moving power, it must again and again receive new velocity which ever increases as it goes on and augments its powerful might and gives vigor to its stroke; for it forces all the

seeds of the thunder to be borne right onward to one spot so to speak, throwing them all together, as on they roll, into that single line.

Perhaps too as it goes on it attracts certain bodies out of the air itself, and these by their blows kindle apace its velocity.

It passes too through things without injuring them, and leaves many things quite whole after it has gone through, because the clear bright fire flies through by the pores.

[350] And it breaks to pieces many things, when the first bodies of the thunderbolt have fallen exactly on the first bodies of these things, at the points where they are intertwined and held together.

Again it easily melts brass and fuses gold in an instant, because its force is formed of bodies minutely small and of smooth elements, which easily make their way in and when they are in, in a moment break up all the knots and untie the bonds of union.

And more especially in autumn the mansion of heaven studded with glittering stars and the whole earth are shaken on all sides, and also when the flowery season of spring discloses itself.

For during the cold fires are wanting and winds fail during the heat, and the clouds then are not of so dense a body.

When therefore the seasons of heaven are between the two extremes, the different causes of thunder and lightning all combine; for the very cross-current of the year mixes up cold and heat, both of which a cloud needs for forging thunderbolts; so that there is great discord in things and the air raving with fires and winds heaves in mighty disorder.

The first part of heat and the last of cold is the spring-time; therefore unlike things must battle with one another and be turbulent when mixed together.

And when the last heat mixed with the first cold rolls on its course, a time which goes by the name of autumn, then too fierce winters are in conflict with summers.

Therefore these seasons are to be called the cross-seas of the year; and it is not wonderful that in that season thunderbolts are most frequent and troublous storms are stirred up in heaven; since both sides then engage in the troublous medley of dubious war, the one armed with flames, the other with winds and water commingled.

This is the way to see into the true nature of the thunderbolt and to understand by what force it produces each effect, and not the turning over the scrolls of Tyrrhene charms and vainly searching for tokens of the hidden will of the gods, in order to know from what quarter the volant fire has come or to which of the two halves it has betaken itself, in what way it has gained an entrance within walled places, and how after lording it with tyrant sway it has gotten itself out from these; also what harm the thunderstroke from heaven can do.

But if Jupiter and other gods shake with an appalling crash the glittering quarters of heaven, and hurl their fire whither each is so minded, why strike

they not those whoever they be who have recked not of committing some abominable sin and make them give forth the flames of lightning from breast pierced through and through, a sharp lesson to men?

[392] And why rather is he whose conscience is burdened with no foul offense, innocent though he be, wrapped and enveloped in the flames, in a moment caught up by the whirlwind and fire of heaven?

Why too aim they at solitary spots and spend their labor in vain? Or are they then practicing their arms and strengthening their sinews? And why do they suffer the father's bolt to be blunted on the earth?

Why does he allow it himself, and not spare it for his enemies? Why again, when heaven is unclouded on all sides, does Jupiter never hurl a bolt on the earth or send abroad his claps? Or does he, so soon as clouds have spread under, then go down in person into them, that from them he may aim the strokes of his bolt near at hand?

Ay and for what reason does he hurl into the sea? Of what has he to impeach its waters and liquid mass and floating fields?

Again, if he wills us to avoid the thunderstroke, why fears he to let us see it discharged? Or if he wills to crush us off our guard with his fire, why thunders he from that side, to enable us to shun it? Why stirs he up beforehand darkness and roarings and rumblings? And how can you believe that he hurls at many points at the same time?

Or would you venture to maintain that it never has happened that more than one stroke was made at one time?

Nay often and often it has happened and must happen that, even as it rains and showers fall in many different quarters, so many thunderings go on at one time.

Once more why does he dash down the holy sanctuaries of the gods and his own gorgeous seats with the destroying thunderbolt, and break the fine-wrought idols of the gods, and spoil his own images of their glory by an overbearing wound? And why does he mostly aim at lofty spots, and why do we see most traces of his fire on the mountain tops?

To proceed, it is easy from these facts to understand in what way those things, which the Greeks from their nature have named *presteres*, come down from above into the sea.

For sometimes a pillar so to speak is let down from heaven and descends into the sea, and round about it the surges boil, stirred up by heavy blasts of winds; and all ships caught in that turmoil are dashed about and brought into extreme danger.

This takes place when at times the force of the wind put in motion cannot burst the cloud which it essays to burst, but weighs it down, so that it is like a pillar let down from heaven into the sea, yet gradually, just as if a thing were thrust down from above and stretched out to the level of the waters by the fist and push of the arm; [436] and when the force of the wind has rent this cloud, it bursts out from it into the sea and occasions a marvelous boiling in the waters;

for the whirling eddy descends and brings down together with it yon cloud of limber body; and as soon as it has forced it down full-charged as it is to the levels of the sea, the eddy in a moment plunges itself entire into the water, and stirs up the whole sea with a prodigious noise and forces it to boil.

Sometimes too the eddy of wind wraps itself up in clouds and gathers out of the air seeds of cloud and imitates in a sort the prester let down from heaven.

When this prester has let itself down to the land and has burst, it belches forth a whirlwind and storm of enormous violence; but as it seldom takes place at all and as mountains cannot but obstruct it on land, it is seen more frequently on the sea with its wide prospect and unobstructed horizon.

Clouds are formed, when in this upper space of heaven many bodies flying about have in some one instant met together, of a rougher sort, such as are able, though they have got the very slightest holds of each other, to catch together and be held in union.

These bodies first cause small clouds to form; and these next catch together and collect into masses and increase by joining with each other and are carried on by the winds continually until a fierce storm has gathered.

The nearer too the tops of a mountain in each case are to heaven, the more constantly at this elevation they smoke with the thick darkness of a swarthy cloud, because, as soon as clouds form, before the eyes can see them, thin as they are, the winds carry and bring them together to the highest summits of a mountain; and then at last when they have gathered in a greater mass, being now dense they are able to make themselves visible and at the same time they are seen to rise up from the very top of the mountain into the ether: the very fact of the case and our sensations, when we climb high mountains, prove that the regions which stretch up on high are windy.

Again clothes hung up on the shore, when they drink in the clinging moisture, prove that nature takes up many bodies over the whole sea as well.

[471] This makes it still more plain that many bodies may likewise rise up out of the salt heaving sea to add to the bulk of clouds; for the two liquids are near akin in their nature.

Again we see mists and steam rise out of all rivers and at the same time from the earth as well; and they forced out like a breath from these parts are then carried upwards and overcast heaven with their darkness and make up clouds on high as they gradually come together; for the heat of starry ether at the same time presses down too on them and by condensing as it were weaves a web of clouds below the blue.

Sometimes there come here into heaven from without those bodies which form clouds and the flying storm-rack; for I have shown that their number passes numbering and that the sum of the deep is infinite; and I have proved with what velocity bodies fly and how in a moment of time they are wont to pass through space unspeakable.

It is not therefore strange that a tempest and darkness often in a short time

cover over with such great mountains of clouds seas and lands, as they hang down upon them overhead, since on all sides through all the cavities of ether and as it were through the vents of the great world around the power of going out and coming in is accorded to the elements.

Now mark and I will explain in what way the rainy moisture is formed in the clouds above and then is sent down and falls to the earth in the shape of rain.

And first I will prove that many seeds of water rise up together with the clouds themselves out of all things and that both the clouds and the water which is in the clouds thus increase together; just as our body increases together with the blood, as well as the sweat and all the moisture which is in the frame.

The clouds likewise imbibe much sea-water as well, like hanging fleeces of wool, when the winds carry them over the great sea.

In like manner moisture is taken up out of all rivers into the clouds; and when the seeds of waters full many in number in many ways have met in them, augmented from all sides, then the close-packed clouds endeavor to discharge their moisture from two causes: the force of the wind drives them together, and likewise the very abundance of the rain-clouds, when a greater mass than usual has been brought together, pushes down, presses from above and forces the rain to stream out.

Again when the clouds are also rarefied by the winds, or are dispersed, being smitten at the same time by the heat of the sun, they discharge a rainy moisture and trickle down, just as wax over a hot fire melts away and turns fast into liquid.

[516] But a violent rain follows, when the clouds are violently pressed upon by both causes, by their own accumulated weight and by the impetuous assault of the wind.

And rains are wont to hold out and to last long, when many seeds of waters are stirred to action, and clouds upon clouds and rack upon rack welling forth from all quarters round about are borne along, and when the reeking earth steams moisture back again from its whole surface.

When in such a case the sun has shone with his rays amid the murky tempest right opposite the dripping rain-clouds, then the color of the rainbow shows itself among the black clouds.

As to the other things which grow by themselves and are formed by themselves, as well as the things which are formed within the clouds, all, without exception all, snow, winds, hail, and cold hoarfrosts and the great force of ice, the great congealing power of waters, and the stop which everywhere curbs running rivers, it is yet most easy to find out and apprehend in mind how all these things take place and in what way they are formed, when you have fully understood the properties assigned to elements.

Now mark and learn what the law of earthquakes is.

And first of all take for granted that the earth below us as well as above is

filled in all parts with windy caverns and bears within its bosom many lakes and many chasms, cliffs and craggy rocks; and you must suppose that many rivers hidden beneath the crust of the earth roll on with violence waves and submerged stones; for the very nature of the case requires it to be throughout like to itself.

With such things then attached and placed below, the earth quakes above from the shock of great falling masses, when underneath time has undermined vast caverns; whole mountains indeed fall in, and in an instant from the mighty shock tremblings spread themselves far and wide from that center.

And with good cause, since buildings beside a road tremble throughout when shaken by a wagon of not such very great weight; and they rock no less, where any sharp pebble on the road jolts up the iron tires of the wheels on both sides.

Sometimes too, when an enormous mass of soil through age rolls down from the land into great and extensive pools of water, the earth rocks and sways with the undulation of the water; [535] just as a vessel at times cannot rest, until the liquid within has ceased to sway about in unsteady undulations.

Again when the wind gathering itself together in the hollow places underground bears down on one point and pushing on presses with great violence the deep caverns, the earth leans over on the side to which the headlong violence of the wind presses.

Then all buildings which are above ground, and ever the more, the more they tower up towards heaven, lean over and bulge out yielding in the same direction, and the timbers wrenched from their supports hangover ready to give way.

And yet men shrink from believing that a time of destruction and ruin awaits the nature of the great world, though they see so great a mass of earth hang ready to fall!

And if the winds did not abate their blowing, no force could rein things in or hold them up on their road to destruction.

As it is, because by turns they do abate and then increase in violence, and so to speak rally and return to the charge, and then are defeated and retire, for this reason the earth oftener threatens to fall than really falls: it leans over and then sways back again, and after tumbling forward recovers in equal poise its fixed position.

For this reason the whole house rocks, the top more than the middle, the middle than the bottom, the bottom in a very very slight degree.

The same great quaking likewise arises from this cause, when on a sudden the wind and some enormous force of air gathering either from without or within the earth have flung themselves into the hollows of the earth, and there chafe at first with much uproar among the great caverns and are carried on with a whirling motion, and when their force afterwards stirred and lashed into fury bursts abroad and at the same moment cleaves the deep earth and opens up a great yawning chasm.

This fell out in Syrian Sidon and took place at Aegium in the Peloponnese, two towns which an outbreak of wind of this sort and the ensuing earthquake threw down.

And many walled places besides fell down by great commotions on land and many towns sank down engulfed in the sea together with their burghers.

And if they do not break out, still the impetuous fury of the air and the fierce violence of the wind spread over the numerous passages of the earth like a shivering-fit and thereby cause a trembling; just as cold when it has pierced into our frames to the very marrow, sets them a-shivering in spite of themselves, forcing them to shake and move.

[597] Men are therefore disturbed by a twofold terror throughout their cities: they fear the roofs above their heads, they dread lest the nature of the earth in a moment break up her caverns underneath, and rent asunder display her own wide-gaping maw and wildly tumbled together seek to fill it up with her own ruins.

Let them then fancy as much as they please that heaven and earth shall be incorruptible and consigned to an everlasting exemption from decay; and yet sometimes the very present force of danger applies on some side or other this goad of fear among others, that the earth shall in an instant be withdrawn from under their feet and carried down into the pit, and that the sum of things shall utterly give way and follow after and a jumbled wreck of world ensue.

First of all they wonder that nature does not increase the bulk of the sea, when there is so great a flow of water into it, when all rivers from all quarters fall into it.

Add to these passing rains and flying storms, which bespatter every sea and moisten every land; add its own springs; yet all these compared with the sum of the sea will be like an addition of bulk hardly amounting to a single drop; it is therefore the less wonderful that the great sea does not increase.

Again the sun absorbs a great deal with his heat: we see him with his burning rays thoroughly dry clothes dripping with wet: but we know seas to be many in number and to stretch over a wide surface.

Therefore however small the portion of moisture which the sun draws off the surface from any one spot, it will yet in so vast an expanse take largely from its waters.

Then again the winds too may withdraw a great deal of moisture as they sweep over the surface, since we very often see the roads dried by the winds in a single night and the soft mud form into hard crusts.

Again I have shown that the clouds take off much moisture too imbibed from the great surface of the sea and scatter it about over the whole earth, when it rains on land and the winds carry on the clouds.

Lastly since the earth is of a porous body and is in contact with the sea, girding its shores all round, just as water comes from the earth into the sea, in the same way it must ooze into the land out of the salt sea; for the salt is strained off and the matter of liquid streams back again to the source and all

flows together to the river-heads, and then passes anew over the lands in afresh current, where a channel once scooped out has carried down the waters with liquid foot.

[640] And now I will explain why it is that fires breathe forth at times through the gorges of mount Aetna with such hurricane-like fury; for with a destroying force of no ordinary kind the flame-storm gathered itself up and lording it over the lands of the Sicilians drew on itself the gaze of neighboring nations, when seeing all the quarters of heaven smoke and sparkle men were filled in heart with awe-struck apprehension, not knowing what strange change nature was travailing to work.

In these matters you must look far and deep and make a wide survey in all directions, in order to bear in mind that the sum of things is unfathomable and to perceive how very small, how inconceivably minute a fraction of the whole sum one heaven is, not so large a fraction of it as one man is of the whole earth.

If you should clearly comprehend, clearly see this point well put, you would cease to wonder at many things.

Does any one among us wonder if he has gotten into his frame a fever that has broken out with burning heat, or into his body the pains of any other disease? The foot suddenly swells, sharp pain often seizes the teeth, or else attacks the eyes; the holy fire breaks out and creeping over the body burns whatever part it has seized upon, and spreads over the frame, because sure enough there are seeds of many things, and this earth and heaven bring to us evil enough to allow of a measureless amount of disease springing up.

In this way then we must suppose that all things are supplied out of the infinite to the whole heaven and earth in quantity sufficient to allow the earth in a moment to be shaken and stirred, and a rapid hurricane to scour over sea and land, the fire of Aetna to overflow, the heaven to be in flames; for that too is seen and the heavenly quarters are on fire; and rain-storms gather in a heavier mass, when the seeds of water have haply come together for such an end.

“Ay, but the stormy rage of the conflagration is too gigantic.”

Yes, and so any river you like is greatest to him who has never before seen any greater, and thus a tree and a man seem gigantic, and in the case of all things of all kinds the greatest a man has seen he fancies to be gigantic, though yet all things with heaven and earth and sea included are nothing to the whole sum of the universal sum.

[680] And now at last I will explain in what ways yon flame roused to fury in a moment blazes forth from the huge furnaces of Aetna. And first the nature of the whole mountain is hollow underneath, underpropped throughout with caverns of basalt rocks.

Furthermore in all caves are wind and air; for wind is produced, when the air has been stirred and put in motion.

When this air has been thoroughly heated and raging about has imparted its

heat to all the rocks round, wherever it comes in contact with them, and to the earth, and has struck out from them fire burning with swift flames, it rises up and then forces itself out on high straight through the gorges; and so carries its heat far and scatters far its ashes and rolls on smoke of a thick pitchy blackness and flings out at the same time stones of prodigious weight; leaving no doubt that this is the stormy force of air.

Again the sea to a great extent breaks its waves and sucks back its surf at the roots of that mountain.

Caverns reach from this sea as far as the deep gorges of the mountain below.

Through these you must admit [that air mixed up with water passes; and] the nature of the case compels [this air to enter in from that] open sea and pass right within and then go out in blasts and so lift up flame and throw out stones and raise clouds of sand; for on the summit are craters, as they name them in their own language; what we call gorges and mouths.

There are things too not a few for which it is not sufficient to assign one cause; you must give several, one of which at the same time is the real cause.

For instance should you see the lifeless body of a man lying at some distance, it would be natural to mention all the different causes of death, in order that the one real cause of that man's death be mentioned among them.

Thus you may be able to prove that he has not died by steel or cold or from disease or haply from poison; yet we know that it is something of this kind which has befallen him; and so in many other cases we may make the same remark.

The Nile rises every summer and overflows the plains, that one sole river throughout the whole land of Egypt.

It waters Egypt often in the middle of the hot season, either because in summer there are north winds opposite its mouths, which at that time of year go by the name of etesian winds.

[717] Blowing up the river they retard it and driving the waters backwards fill its channel full and force the river to stand still; for beyond a doubt these blasts which start from the icy constellations of the pole are carried right up the stream.

That river comes from the south out of the heat-fraught country, rising far up from the central region of day among races of men black in their sun-baked complexion.

It is quite possible too that the great accumulation of sand may bar up the mouths against the opposing waves, when the sea stirred up by the winds throws up the sand within the channel; whereby the outlet of the river is rendered less free and the current of the waters at the same time less rapid in its downward flow.

It may be also that the rains are more frequent at its source in that season, because the etesian blasts of the north winds drive all the clouds together into those parts at that time.

And, you are to know, when they have been driven on to the central region of day and have gathered together, then the clouds jammed close against the high mountains are massed together and violently compressed.

Perhaps too it gets its increase high up from the lofty mountains of the Ethiopians, when the all-surveying sun with his thawing rays constrains the white snows to descend into the plains.

Now mark, and I will make clear to you what kind of nature the several Avernian places and lakes possess.

First of all, as to the name Avemian by which they are called, it has been given to them from their real nature, because they are noxious to all birds; for when they have arrived in flight just opposite those spots, they forget to row with their wings, they drop their sails and fall with soft neck outstretched headlong to the earth, if so be that the nature of the ground admit of that, or into the water, if so be that a lake of Avernus spreads below.

There is such a spot at Cumae, where the mountains are charged with acrid sulfur, and smoke enriched with hot springs.

Such a spot there also is within the Athenian walls, on the very summit of the citadel, beside the temple of bountiful Tritonian Pallas; which croaking crows never come near on the wing; no not when the high altars smoke with offerings: so constantly they fly, not before the sharp wrath of Pallas for the sake of yon vigil kept, as the poets of the Greeks have sung, but the nature of the place suffices by its own proper power.

[756] In Syria too as well a spot, we are told, is found to exist of such a sort that as soon as ever even four-footed beasts have entered in, its mere natural power forces them to fall down heavily, just as if they were felled in a moment as sacrifices to the manes gods.

Now all these things go on by a natural law, and it is quite plain whence spring the causes from which they are produced; that the gate of Orcus be not haply believed to exist in such spots; and next we imagine that the manes gods from beneath do haply draw souls down from them to the borders of Acheron; as wing-footed stags are supposed often by their scent to draw out from their holes the savage serpent-tribes.

How widely opposed to true reason this is, now learn; for now I essay to tell of the real fact.

First of all I say, as I have often said before, that in the earth are elements of things of every kind: many, which serve for food, helpful to life; and many whose property it is to cause diseases and hasten death.

And we have shown before that one thing is more adapted to one, another thing to another living creature for the purposes of life, because of their natures and their textures and their primary elements being all unlike the one to the other.

Many which are noxious pass through the ears, many make their way too through the nostrils, dangerous and harsh when they come in contact; and not a few are to be shunned by the touch, and not a few to be avoided by the sight,

and others are nauseous in taste.

Again you may see how many things are for man of a virulently noxious sensation and are nauseous and oppressive; to certain trees for instance has been given so very oppressive a shade that they often cause headaches when a man has lain down under them extended on the grass.

There is a tree too on the great hills of Helicon which has the property of killing a man by the noisome scent of its flower.

All these things you are to know rise up out of the earth, because it contains many seeds of many things in many ways mixed up together and gives them out in a state of separation.

Again when a newly extinguished night-light encounters the nostrils with its acrid stench, it sends to sleep then and there a man who from disease is subject to falling down and foaming at the mouth.

A woman is put to sleep by oppressive castor and falls back in her seat, and her gay work drops out of her soft hands, if she has smelt it at the time when she has her monthly discharges.

[796] And many things besides relax through all the frame the fainting limbs and shake the soul in its seats within.

Then too if you linger long in the hot baths when you are somewhat full and do bathe, how liable you are to tumble down in a fit while seated in the midst of the hot water!

Again, how readily do the oppressive power and fumes of charcoal make their way into the brain, if we have not first taken water! But when burning violently it has filled the chambers of a house, the fumes of the virulent substance act on the nerves like a murderous blow.

See you not too that even within the earth sulfur is generated and asphalt forms incrustations of a noisome stench? See you not, when they are following up the veins of silver and gold and searching with the pick quite into the bowels of the earth, what stench Scaptensula exhales from below?

Then what mischief do gold mines exhale! To what state do they reduce men's faces and what a complexion they produce!

Know you not by sight or hearsay how they commonly perish in a short time and how all vital power fails those whom the hard compulsion of necessity confines in such an employment?

All such exhalations then the earth steams forth and breathes out into the open air and light of heaven.

Thus too the Avernian spots must send up some power deadly to birds, which rises up from the earth into the air so as to poison a certain portion of the atmosphere; in such a way that a bird as soon as ever it is borne on its wings into it, is then attacked by the unseen poison and so palsied that it tumbles plump down on the spot where this exhalation has its course.

And when it falls into it, then the same power of that exhalation robs all its limbs of the remnants of life: first of all it causes a sort of dizziness; but afterwards, when the birds have tumbled into the very springs of the poison,

then life too has to be vomited forth, because all round rises up large store of mischievous matter.

Sometimes too this power and exhalation of Avernus dispels whatever air lies between the birds and earth, so that almost a void is left there.

And when the birds have arrived in their flight just opposite this spot, at once the buoyant force of their pinions is crippled and rendered vain and all the sustaining efforts of their wings are lost on both sides.

So when they are unable to buoy themselves up and lean upon their wings, nature, you know, compels them by their weight to tumble down to earth, and lying stark through what is now almost a void they disperse their soul through all the openings of their body.

[840] Again during summer the water in wells becomes colder, because the earth is rarefied by heat and rapidly sends out into the air whatever seeds of heat it happens to have.

The more then the earth is drained of heat, the colder becomes the water which is hidden in the earth.

Again when all the earth is compressed by cold and contracts and so to say congeals, then, you are to know, while it contracts, it presses out into the wells whatever heat it contains itself.

At the fane of Hammon there is said to be a fountain which is cold in the daylight and hot in the night-time.

This fountain men marvel at exceedingly and suppose that it suddenly becomes hot by the influence of the fierce sun below the earth, when night has covered the earth with awful darkness.

But this is far far removed from true reason.

Why when the sun though in contact with the uncovered body of the water has not been able to make it hot on its upper side, though his light above possesses such great heat, how can he below the earth which is of so dense a body boil the water and glut it with heat? Above all, when he can scarcely with his burning rays force his heat through the walls of houses.

What then is the cause? This sure enough: the earth is more porous and warmer round the fountain than the rest of the earth, and there are many seeds of fire near the body of water.

For this reason when night has buried the earth in its dewy shadows, the earth at once becomes quite cold and contracts: in this way just as if it were squeezed by the hand it forces out into the fountain whatever seeds of fire it has; and these make the water hot to the touch and taste.

Next when the sun has risen and with his rays has loosened the earth and has rarefied it as his heat waxes stronger, the first-beginnings of fire return back to their ancient seats and all the heat of the water withdraws into the earth: for this reason the fountain becomes cold in the daylight.

Again the liquid of water is played upon by the sun's rays and in the daytime is rarefied by his throbbing heat; and therefore it gives up whatever seeds of fire it has; just as it often parts with the frost which it holds in itself,

and thaws the ice and loosens its bonds.

[879] There is also a cold fountain of such a nature that tow, often when held over it, imbibes fire forthwith and emits flame; a pine torch in like manner is lighted and shines among the waters, in whatever direction it swims under the impulse of the winds.

Because sure enough there are in the water very many seeds of heat, and from the earth itself at the bottom must rise up bodies of fire throughout the whole fountain and at the same time pass abroad in exhalations and go forth into the air, not in such numbers however that the fountain can become hot, for these reasons a force compels those seeds to burst out through the water and disperse abroad and to unite when they have mounted up.

In the sea at Aradus is a fountain of this kind, which wells up with fresh water and keeps off the salt waters all round it; and in many other quarters the sea affords a seasonable help in need to thirsting sailors, vomiting forth fresh waters amid the salt.

In this way then those seeds may burst forth through that fountain and well out; and when they are met together in the tow or cohere in the body of the pine-torch, they at once readily take fire, because the tow and pinewood contain in them likewise many seeds of latent fire.

See you not too that, when you bring a newly extinguished wick near night-lamps it catches light before it has touched the flame; and the same with the pinewood? And many things beside catch fire at some distance touched merely by the heat, before the fire in actual contact infects them.

This therefore you must suppose to take place in that fountain as well.

Next in order I will proceed to discuss by what law of nature it comes to pass that iron can be attracted by that stone which the Greeks call the Magnet from the name of its native place, because it has its origin within the bounds of the country of the Magnesians.

This stone men wonder at; as it often produces a chain of rings hanging down from it.

Thus you may see sometimes five and more suspended in succession and tossing about in the light airs, one always hanging down from one and attached to its lower side, and each in turn one from the other experiencing the binding power of the stone: with such a continued current its force flies through all.

In things of this kind many points must be established before you can assign the true law of the thing in question, and it must be approached by a very circuitous road; [920] wherefore all the more I call for an attentive ear and mind.

In the first place from all things whatsoever which we see there must incessantly stream and be discharged and scattered abroad such bodies as strike the eyes and provoke vision.

Smells too incessantly stream from certain things; as does cold from rivers, heat from the sun, spray from the waves of the sea that eats into walls near the

shore.

Various sounds too cease not to stream through the air.

Then a moist salt flavor often comes into the mouth, when we are moving about beside the sea; and when we look on at the mixing of a decoction of wormwood, its bitterness affects us.

In such a constant stream from all things the several qualities of things are carried and are transmitted in all directions round, and no delay, no respite in the flow is ever granted, since we constantly have feeling, and may at anytime see, smell and hear the sound of anything.

And now I will state once again how rare a body all things have: a question made clear in the first part of my poem also: although the knowledge of this is of importance in regard to many things, above all in regard to this very question which I am coming to discuss, at the very outset it is necessary to establish that nothing comes under sense save body mixed with void.

For instance in caves rocks overhead sweat with moisture and trickle down in oozing drops.

Sweat too oozes out from our whole body; the beard grows, and hairs over all our limbs and frame.

Food is distributed through all the veins, gives increase and nourishment to the very extremities and nails.

We feel too cold and heat pass through brass, we feel them pass through gold and silver, when we hold full cups.

Again voices fly through the stone partitions of houses; smell passes through and cold, and the heat of fire which is wont ay to pierce even the strength of iron, where the Gaulish cuirass girds the body round.

And when a storm has gathered in earth and heaven, and when along with it the influence of disease makes its way in from without, they both withdraw respectively to heaven and earth and there work their wills, since there is nothing at all that is not of a rare texture of, body.

Furthermore all bodies whatever which are discharged from things are not qualified to excite the same sensations nor are adapted for all things alike.

The sun for instance bakes and dries up the earth, but thaws ice, and forces the snows piled up high on the high hills to melt away beneath his rays; [964] wax again turns to liquid when placed within reach of his heat,

Fire also melts brass and fuses gold, but shrivels up and draws together hides and flesh.

The liquid of water after fire hardens steel, but softens hides and flesh hardened by heat.

The wild olive delights the bearded she-goats as much as if the flavor it yielded were of ambrosia and steeped in nectar; but nothing that puts forth leaf is more bitter to man than this food.

Again a swine eschews marjoram-oil and dreads all perfumes; for they are rank poison to bristly swine, though they are found at times to give us as it were fresh life.

But on the other hand though mire is to us the nastiest filth, it is found to be so welcome to swine that they wallow in it all over with a craving not to be satisfied.

There is still one point left which it seems proper to mention, before I come to speak of the matter in hand.

Since many pores are assigned to various things, they must possess natures differing the one from the other and must have each its own nature, its own direction: thus there are in living creatures various senses, each of which takes into it in its own peculiar way its own special object; for we see that sounds pass into one thing, taste from different flavors into another thing, smells into another.

Again one thing is seen to stream through stones and another thing to pass through woods, another through gold, and another still to go out through silver and brass; for form is seen to stream through this passage, heat through that, and one thing is seen to pass through by the same way more quickly than other things.

The nature of the passages, you are to know, compels it so to be, varying in manifold wise, as we have shown a little above, owing to the unlike nature and textures of things.

Therefore now that these points have all been established and arranged for us as premisses ready to our hand, for what remains, the law will easily be explained out of them, and the whole cause be laid open which attracts the strength of iron.

First of all there must stream from this stone very many seeds or a current if you will which dispels with blows all the air which lies between the stone and iron.

When this space is emptied and much room left void between, forthwith the first-beginnings of iron fall headlong forward into the void in one mass, and in consequence the ring itself follows and then goes on with its whole body.

[1009] And nothing has its primal elements more intricately entangled or coheres in closer connection than the nature of stubborn iron and its coldness that makes you shiver.

Therefore what I say is the less strange, that from among such elements as these bodies cannot gather in large numbers out of the iron and be carried into the void without the whole ring following.

This it does do, and follows on until it has quite reached the stone and fastened on it with unseen bonds of connection.

The same thing takes place in all directions: on whatever side a void is formed, whether athwart or from above the first bodies next it are at once carried on into the void; for they are set in motion by blows from another source and cannot by their own free act rise up into the air.

Moreover (to render it more feasible, this thing also is helped on by external aid and motion) as soon as the air in front of the ring has been made

rarer and the space more empty and void, it follows at once that all the air which lies behind, carries and pushes it on as it were at its back.

For the air which lies around them always beats on things; but at such a time as this it is able to push on the iron, because on one side a space is void and receives the iron into it.

This air of which I am speaking to you makes its way with much subtlety through the frequent pores of the iron to its minute parts and then thrusts and pushes it on, as the wind a ship and its sails.

Again all things must have air in their body, since they are of a rare body and air surrounds and is in contact with all things.

This air therefore which is in the inmost recesses of the iron, is ever stirred in restless motion and therefore beats the ring without a doubt and stirs it within, you know: the ring is carried in the direction in which it has once plunged forward, and into the void part towards which it has made its start.

Sometimes too it happens that the nature of iron is repelled from this stone, being in the habit of flying from and following it in turns.

I have seen Samothracian iron rings even jump up, and at the same time filings of iron rave within brass basins, when this Magnet stone had been placed under: such a strong desire the iron seems to have to fly from the stone.

So great a disturbance is raised by the interposition of the brass, because sure enough when the current of the brass has first seized on and taken possession of the open passages of the iron, the current of the stone comes after and finds all things full in the iron and has no opening to swim through as before.

[1053] It is forced therefore to dash against and beat with its wave the iron texture; by which means it repels from it and sets in motion through the brass that which without the brass it often draws to itself.

And forbear herein to wonder that the current from this stone is not able to set in motion other things as well as iron: some of these stand still by the power of their own weight; for instance gold; and others, because they are of so rare a body that the current flies through them uninterrupted, cannot in any case be set in motion; to which class wood is found to belong.

When therefore the nature of iron lying between the two has received into it certain first bodies of brass, then do the Magnet stones set it in motion with their stream.

And yet these cases are not so much at variance with other things, that I have only a scanty store of similar instances to relate of things mutually fitted one for the other and for nothing else: stones for instance you see are cemented by mortar alone; wood is united with wood so firmly by bulls' glue only, that the veins of boards often gape in cracks before the binding power of the glue can be brought to loosen its hold.

Vine-born juices venture to mix with streams of water, though heavy pitch and light oil cannot.

Again the purple dye of the shellfish so unites with the body of wool alone,

that it cannot in any case be severed, not were you to take pains to undo what is done with Neptune's wave, not if the whole sea were willed to wash it out with all its waters.

Then too is there not one thing only that fastens gold to gold, and is not brass soldered to brass by tin? And how many other cases of the kind might one find! What then? You have no need whatever of such long circuitous roads, nor is it worth my while to spend so much pains on this, but it is better briefly to comprise many things in few words: things whose textures have such a mutual correspondence, that cavities fit solids, the cavities of the first the solids of the second, the cavities of the second the solids of the first, form the closest union.

Again some things may be fastened together and held in union with hooks and eyes as it were; and this seems rather to be the case with this stone and iron.

[1090] And now I will explain what the law of diseases is and from what causes the force of disease may suddenly gather itself up and bring death-dealing destruction on the race of man and the troops of brute beasts.

And first I have shown above that there are seeds of many things helpful to our life; and on the other hand many must fly about conducing to disease and death.

When these by chance have happened to gather together and have disordered the atmosphere, the air becomes distempered.

And all that force of disease and that pestilence come either from without down through the atmosphere in the shape of clouds and mists, or else do gather themselves up and rise out of the earth, when soaked with wet it has contracted a taint, being beaten upon by unseasonable rains and suns.

See you not too that all who come to a place far away from country and home are affected by the strangeness of climate and water, because there are wide differences in such things?

For what a difference may we suppose between the climate of the Briton and that of Egypt where the pole of heaven slants askew, and again between that in Pontus and that of Gades and so on to the races of men black with sun-baked complexion?

Now as we see these four climates under the four opposite winds and quarters of heaven all differing from each other, so also the complexions and faces of the men are seen to differ widely and diseases varying in kind are found to seize upon the different races.

There is the elephant disease which is generated beside the streams of Nile in the midst of Egypt and nowhere else.

In Attica the feet are attacked and the eyes in Achaean lands.

And so different places are hurtful to different parts and members: the variations of air occasion that.

Therefore when an atmosphere which happens to put itself in motion unsuited to us and a hurtful air beg into advance, they creep slowly on in the

shape of mist and cloud and disorder everything in their line of advance and compel all to change; and when they have at length reached our atmosphere, they corrupt it too and make it like to themselves and unsuited to us.

This new destroying power and pestilence therefore all at once either fall upon the waters or else sink deep into the corn-crops or other food of man and provender of beast; or else their force remains suspended within the atmosphere, and when we inhale from it mixed airs, we must absorb at the same time into our body those things as well.

In like manner pestilence often falls on kine also and a distemper too on the silly sheep.

[1132] And it makes no difference whether we travel to places unfavorable to us and change the atmosphere which wraps us round, or whether nature without our choice brings to us a tainted atmosphere or something to the use of which we have not been accustomed, and which is able to attack us on its first arrival.

Such a form of disease and a death-fraught miasm erst within the borders of Cecrops defiled the whole land with dead, and dispeopled the streets, drained the town of burghers.

Rising first and starting from the inmost corners of Egypt, after traversing much air and many floating fields, the plague brooded at last over the whole people of Pandion; and then they were handed over in troops to disease and death.

First of all they would have the head seized with burning heat and both eyes blood-shot with aglare diffused over; the livid throat within would exude blood and the passage of the voice be clogged and choked with ulcers, and the mind's interpreter the tongue drip with gore, quite enfeebled with sufferings, heavy in movement, rough to touch.

Next when the force of disease passing down the throat had filled the breast and had streamed together even into the sad heart of the sufferers, then would all the barriers of life give way.

The breath would pour out at the mouth a noisome stench, even as the stench of rotting carcasses thrown out unburied.

And then the powers of the entire mind, the whole body would sink utterly, now on the very threshold of death.

And a bitter despondency was the constant attendant on insufferable ills and complaining mingled with moaning.

An ever-recurring hiccup often the night and day through, forcing on continual spasms in sinews and limbs, would break men quite, for wearying those forspent before.

And yet in none could you perceive the skin on the surface of the body burn with any great heat, but the body would rather offer to the hand a lukewarm sensation and at the same time be red all over with ulcers burnt into it so to speak, like unto the holy fire as it spreads over the frame.

The inward parts of the men however would burn to the very bones, a

flame would bum within the stomach as within furnaces.

Nothing was light and thin enough to apply to the relief of the body of any one; ever wind and cold alone.

Many would plunge their limbs burning with disease into the cool rivers, throwing their body naked into the water.

[1174] Many tumbled headforemost deep down into the wells, meeting the water straight with mouth wide agape.

Parching thirst with a craving not to be appeased, drenching their bodies, would make an abundant draught no better than the smallest drop.

No respite was there of ill: their bodies would lie quite spent.

The healing art would mutter low in voiceless fear, as again and again they rolled about their eye-balls wide open, burning with disease, never visited by sleep.

And many symptoms of death besides would then be given, the mind disordered in sorrow and fear, the clouded brow, the fierce delirious expression, the ears too troubled and filled with ringings, the breathing quick or else strangely loud and slow-recurring, and the sweat glistening wet over the neck, the spittle in thin small flakes, tinged with a saffron-color, salt, scarce forced up the rough throat by coughing.

The tendons of the hands ceased not to contract, the limbs to shiver, a coldness to mount with slow sure pace from the feet upward.

Then at their very last moments they had nostrils pinched, the tip of the nose sharp, eyes deep-sunk, temples hollow, the skin cold and hard, on the grim mouth a grin, the brow tense and swollen; and not long after their limbs would be stretched stiff in death: about the eighth day of bright sunlight or else on the ninth return of his lamp they would yield up life.

And if any of them at that time had shunned the doom of death, yet in after time consumption and death would await him from noisome ulcers and the black discharge of the bowels, or else a quantity of purulent blood accompanied by headache would often pass out by the gorged nostrils: into these the whole strength and substance of the man would stream.

Then too if any one had escaped the acrid discharge of noisome blood, the disease would yet pass into his sinews and joints and onward even into the sexual organs of the body; and some from excessive dread of the gates of death would live bereaved of these parts by the knife; and some though without hands and feet would continue in life, and some would lose their eyes: with such force had the fear of death come upon them.

And some were seized with such utter loss of memory that they did not know themselves.

And though bodies lay in heaps above bodies unburied on the ground, yet would the race of birds and beasts either scour faraway, to escape the acrid stench, or where anyone had tasted, it drooped in near-following death.

[1219] Though hardly at all in those days would any bird appear, or the sullen breeds of wild beasts quit the forests.

Many would droop with disease and die: above all faithful dogs would lie stretched in all the streets and yield up breath with a struggle, for the power of disease would wrench life from their frame.

Funerals lonely, unattended, would be hurried on with emulous haste.

And no sure and general method of cure was found; for that which had given to one man the power to inhale the vital air and to gaze on the quarters of heaven, would be destruction to others and would bring on death.

But in such times this was what was deplorable and above all eminently heart-rending: when a man saw himself enmeshed by the disease, as though he were doomed to death, losing all spirit he would lie with sorrow-stricken heart, and with his, thoughts turned on death would surrender his life then and there.

Ay for at no time did they cease to catch from one another the infection of the devouring plague, like to woolly flocks and horned herds.

And this all heaped death on death: whenever any refused to attend their own sick, killing neglect soon after would punish them for their too great love of life and fear of death by a foul and evil death, abandoned in turn, forlorn of help.

But they who had stayed which shame would then compel them to undergo and the sick man's accents of affection mingled with those of complaining: this kind of death the most virtuous would meet. * * and different bodies on by them, would perish by infection and the labor different piles, struggling as they did to bury the multitude of their dead: then spent with tears and grief they would go home; and in great part they would take to their bed from sorrow.

And none could be found whom at so fearful a time neither disease nor death nor mourning assailed.

Then too every shepherd and herdsman, ay and sturdy guider of the bent plow sickened; and their bodies would lie huddled together in the corners of a hut, delivered over to death by poverty and disease.

Sometimes you might see lifeless bodies of parents above their lifeless children, and then the reverse of this, children giving up life above their mothers and fathers.

And in no small measure that affliction streamed from the land into the town, brought thither by the sickening crowd of peasants meeting plague-stricken from every side.

[1262] They would fill all places and buildings: wherefore all the more the heat would [destroy them and] thus close-packed death would pile them up in heaps.

Many bodies drawn forth by thirst and tumbled out along the street would lie extended by the fountains of water, the breath of life cut off from their too great delight in water; and over all the open places of the people and the streets you might see many limbs drooping with their half-lifeless body, foul with stench and covered with rags, perish away from filth of body, with

nothing but skin on their bones, now nearly buried in noisome sores and dirt.

All the holy sanctuaries of the gods too death had filled with lifeless bodies, and all the temples of the heavenly powers in all parts stood burdened with carcasses: all which places the wardens had thronged with guests.

For now no longer the worship of the gods or their divinities were greatly regarded: so overmastering was the present affliction.

Nor did those rites of sepulture continue in force in the city, with which that pious folk had always been wont to be buried; for the whole of it was in dismay and confusion, and each man would sorrowfully bury as the present moment allowed.

And the sudden pressure and poverty prompted to many frightful acts; thus with a loud uproar they would place their own kinsfolk upon the funeral piles of others, and apply torches, quarreling often with much bloodshed sooner than abandon the bodies.

THE END

ON THE NATURE OF THINGS: VERSE TRANSLATION



A METRICAL TRANSLATION

Translated by William Ellery Leonard

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BOOK I

PROEM

Mother of Rome, delight of Gods and men,
Dear Venus that beneath the gliding stars
Makest to teem the many-voyaged main
And fruitful lands — for all of living things
Through thee alone are evermore conceived,
Through thee are risen to visit the great sun —
Before thee, Goddess, and thy coming on,
Flee stormy wind and massy cloud away,
For thee the daedal Earth bears scented flowers,
For thee waters of the unvexed deep
Smile, and the hollows of the serene sky
Glow with diffused radiance for thee!
For soon as comes the springtime face of day,
And procreant gales blow from the West unbarred,
First fowls of air, smit to the heart by thee,
Foretoken thy approach, O thou Divine,
And leap the wild herds round the happy fields
Or swim the bounding torrents. Thus amain,
Seized with the spell, all creatures follow thee
Whithersoever thou walkest forth to lead,
And thence through seas and mountains and swift streams,
Through leafy homes of birds and greening plains,
Kindling the lure of love in every breast,
Thou bringest the eternal generations forth,
Kind after kind. And since 'tis thou alone
Guidest the Cosmos, and without thee naught
Is risen to reach the shining shores of light,
Nor aught of joyful or of lovely born,
Thee do I crave co-partner in that verse
Which I presume on Nature to compose
For Memmius mine, whom thou hast willed to be
Peerless in every grace at every hour —
Wherefore indeed, Divine one, give my words
Immortal charm. Lull to a timely rest
O'er sea and land the savage works of war,
For thou alone hast power with public peace
To aid mortality; since he who rules
The savage works of battle, puissant Mars,
How often to thy bosom flings his strength

I may at last most gloriously uncloud
For thee the light beyond, wherewith to view
The core of being at the centre hid.
And for the rest, summon to judgments true,
Unbusied ears and singleness of mind
Withdrawn from cares; lest these my gifts, arranged
For thee with eager service, thou disdain
Before thou comprehendest: since for thee
I prove the supreme law of Gods and sky,
And the primordial germs of things unfold,
Whence Nature all creates, and multiplies
And fosters all, and whither she resolves
Each in the end when each is overthrown.
This ultimate stock we have devised to name
Procreant atoms, matter, seeds of things,
Or primal bodies, as primal to the world.

I fear perhaps thou deemest that we fare
An impious road to realms of thought profane;
But 'tis that same religion oftener far
Hath bred the foul impieties of men:
As once at Aulis, the elected chiefs,
Foremost of heroes, Danaan counsellors,
Defiled Diana's altar, virgin queen,
With Agamemnon's daughter, foully slain.
She felt the chaplet round her maiden locks
And fillets, fluttering down on either cheek,
And at the altar marked her grieving sire,
The priests beside him who concealed the knife,
And all the folk in tears at sight of her.
With a dumb terror and a sinking knee
She dropped; nor might avail her now that first
'Twas she who gave the king a father's name.
They raised her up, they bore the trembling girl
On to the altar — hither led not now
With solemn rites and hymeneal choir,
But sinless woman, sinfully foredone,
A parent felled her on her bridal day,
Making his child a sacrificial beast
To give the ships auspicious winds for Troy:
Such are the crimes to which Religion leads.

And there shall come the time when even thou,
Forced by the soothsayer's terror-tales, shalt seek
To break from us. Ah, many a dream even now

Can they concoct to rout thy plans of life,
And trouble all thy fortunes with base fears.
I own with reason: for, if men but knew
Some fixed end to ills, they would be strong
By some device unconquered to withstand
Religions and the menacings of seers.
But now nor skill nor instrument is theirs,
Since men must dread eternal pains in death.
For what the soul may be they do not know,
Whether 'tis born, or enter in at birth,
And whether, snatched by death, it die with us,
Or visit the shadows and the vasty caves
Of Orcus, or by some divine decree
Enter the brute herds, as our Ennius sang,
Who first from lovely Helicon brought down
A laurel wreath of bright perennial leaves,
Renowned forever among the Italian clans.
Yet Ennius too in everlasting verse
Proclaims those vaults of Acheron to be,
Though thence, he said, nor souls nor bodies fare,
But only phantom figures, strangely wan,
And tells how once from out those regions rose
Old Homer's ghost to him and shed salt tears
And with his words unfolded Nature's source.
Then be it ours with steady mind to clasp
The purport of the skies — the law behind
The wandering courses of the sun and moon;
To scan the powers that speed all life below;
But most to see with reasonable eyes
Of what the mind, of what the soul is made,
And what it is so terrible that breaks
On us asleep, or waking in disease,
Until we seem to mark and hear at hand
Dead men whose bones earth bosomed long ago.

SUBSTANCE IS ETERNAL

This terror, then, this darkness of the mind,
Not sunrise with its flaring spokes of light,
Nor glittering arrows of morning can disperse,
But only Nature's aspect and her law,
Which, teaching us, hath this exordium:
Nothing from nothing ever yet was born.
Fear holds dominion over mortality
Only because, seeing in land and sky

So much the cause whereof no wise they know,
Men think Divinities are working there.
Meantime, when once we know from nothing still
Nothing can be create, we shall divine
More clearly what we seek: those elements
From which alone all things created are,
And how accomplished by no tool of Gods.
Suppose all sprang from all things: any kind
Might take its origin from any thing,
No fixed seed required. Men from the sea
Might rise, and from the land the scaly breed,
And, fowl full fledged come bursting from the sky;
The horned cattle, the herds and all the wild
Would haunt with varying offspring tilth and waste;
Nor would the same fruits keep their olden trees,
But each might grow from any stock or limb
By chance and change. Indeed, and were there not
For each its procreant atoms, could things have
Each its unalterable mother old?
But, since produced from fixed seeds are all,
Each birth goes forth upon the shores of light
From its own stuff, from its own primal bodies.
And all from all cannot become, because
In each resides a secret power its own.
Again, why see we lavished o'er the lands
At spring the rose, at summer heat the corn,
The vines that mellow when the autumn lures,
If not because the fixed seeds of things
At their own season must together stream,
And new creations only be revealed
When the due times arrive and pregnant earth
Safely may give unto the shores of light
Her tender progenies? But if from naught
Were their becoming, they would spring abroad
Suddenly, unforeseen, in alien months,
With no primordial germs, to be preserved
From procreant unions at an adverse hour.
Nor on the mingling of the living seeds
Would space be needed for the growth of things
Were life an increment of nothing: then
The tiny babe forthwith would walk a man,
And from the turf would leap a branching tree —
Wonders unheard of; for, by Nature, each
Slowly increases from its lawful seed,

And through that increase shall conserve its kind.
Whence take the proof that things enlarge and feed
From out their proper matter. Thus it comes
That earth, without her seasons of fixed rains,
Could bear no produce such as makes us glad,
And whatsoever lives, if shut from food,
Prolongs its kind and guards its life no more.
Thus easier 'tis to hold that many things
Have primal bodies in common (as we see
The single letters common to many words)
Than aught exists without its origins.
Moreover, why should Nature not prepare
Men of a bulk to ford the seas afoot,
Or rend the mighty mountains with their hands,
Or conquer Time with length of days, if not
Because for all begotten things abides
The changeless stuff, and what from that may spring
Is fixed forevermore? Lastly we see
How far the tilled surpass the fields untilled
And to the labour of our hands return
Their more abounding crops; there are indeed
Within the earth primordial germs of things,
Which, as the ploughshare turns the fruitful clods
And kneads the mould, we quicken into birth.
Else would ye mark, without all toil of ours,
Spontaneous generations, fairer forms.
Confess then, naught from nothing can become,
Since all must have their seeds, wherefrom to grow,
Wherefrom to reach the gentle fields of air.
Hence too it comes that Nature all dissolves
Into their primal bodies again, and naught
Perishes ever to annihilation.
For, were aught mortal in its every part,
Before our eyes it might be snatched away
Unto destruction; since no force were needed
To sunder its members and undo its bands.
Whereas, of truth, because all things exist,
With seed imperishable, Nature allows
Destruction nor collapse of aught, until
Some outward force may shatter by a blow,
Or inward craft, entering its hollow cells,
Dissolve it down. And more than this, if Time,
That wastes with eld the works along the world,
Destroy entire, consuming matter all,

Whence then may Venus back to light of life
Restore the generations kind by kind?
Or how, when thus restored, may daedal Earth
Foster and plenish with her ancient food,
Which, kind by kind, she offers unto each?
Whence may the water-springs, beneath the sea,
Or inland rivers, far and wide away,
Keep the unfathomable ocean full?
And out of what does Ether feed the stars?
For lapsed years and infinite age must else
Have eat all shapes of mortal stock away:
But be it the Long Ago contained those germs,
By which this sum of things recruited lives,
Those same infallibly can never die,
Nor nothing to nothing evermore return.
And, too, the selfsame power might end alike
All things, were they not still together held
By matter eternal, shackled through its parts,
Now more, now less. A touch might be enough
To cause destruction. For the slightest force
Would loose the weft of things wherein no part
Were of imperishable stock. But now
Because the fastenings of primordial parts
Are put together diversely and stuff
Is everlasting, things abide the same
Unhurt and sure, until some power comes on
Strong to destroy the warp and woof of each:
Nothing returns to naught; but all return
At their collapse to primal forms of stuff.
Lo, the rains perish which Ether-father throws
Down to the bosom of Earth-mother; but then
Upsprings the shining grain, and boughs are green
Amid the trees, and trees themselves wax big
And lade themselves with fruits; and hence in turn
The race of man and all the wild are fed;
Hence joyful cities thrive with boys and girls;
And leafy woodlands echo with new birds;
Hence cattle, fat and drowsy, lay their bulk
Along the joyous pastures whilst the drops
Of white ooze trickle from distended bags;
Hence the young scamper on their weakling joints
Along the tender herbs, fresh hearts afrisk
With warm new milk. Thus naught of what so seems
Perishes utterly, since Nature ever

Upbuilds one thing from other, suffering naught
To come to birth but through some other's death.

And now, since I have taught that things cannot
Be born from nothing, nor the same, when born,
To nothing be recalled, doubt not my words,
Because our eyes no primal germs perceive;
For mark those bodies which, though known to be
In this our world, are yet invisible:
The winds infuriate lash our face and frame,
Unseen, and swamp huge ships and rend the clouds,
Or, eddying wildly down, bestrew the plains
With mighty trees, or scour the mountain tops
With forest-crackling blasts. Thus on they rave
With uproar shrill and ominous moan. The winds,
'Tis clear, are sightless bodies sweeping through
The sea, the lands, the clouds along the sky,
Vexing and whirling and seizing all amain;
And forth they flow and pile destruction round,
Even as the water's soft and supple bulk
Becoming a river of abounding floods,
Which a wide downpour from the lofty hills
Swells with big showers, dashes headlong down
Fragments of woodland and whole branching trees;
Nor can the solid bridges bide the shock
As on the waters whelm: the turbulent stream,
Strong with a hundred rains, beats round the piers,
Crashes with havoc, and rolls beneath its waves
Down-toppled masonry and ponderous stone,
Hurling away whatever would oppose.
Even so must move the blasts of all the winds,
Which, when they spread, like to a mighty flood,
Hither or thither, drive things on before
And hurl to ground with still renewed assault,
Or sometimes in their circling vortex seize
And bear in cones of whirlwind down the world:
The winds are sightless bodies and naught else —
Since both in works and ways they rival well
The mighty rivers, the visible in form.
Then too we know the varied smells of things
Yet never to our nostrils see them come;
With eyes we view not burning heats, nor cold,
Nor are we wont men's voices to behold.
Yet these must be corporeal at the base,

Since thus they smite the senses: naught there is
Save body, having property of touch.
And raiment, hung by surf-beat shore, grows moist,
The same, spread out before the sun, will dry;
Yet no one saw how sank the moisture in,
Nor how by heat off-driven. Thus we know,
That moisture is dispersed about in bits
Too small for eyes to see. Another case:
A ring upon the finger thins away
Along the under side, with years and suns;
The drippings from the eaves will scoop the stone;
The hooked ploughshare, though of iron, wastes
Amid the fields insidiously. We view
The rock-paved highways worn by many feet;
And at the gates the brazen statues show
Their right hands leaner from the frequent touch
Of wayfarers innumerable who greet.
We see how wearing-down hath minished these,
But just what motes depart at any time,
The envious nature of vision bars our sight.
Lastly whatever days and nature add
Little by little, constraining things to grow
In due proportion, no gaze however keen
Of these our eyes hath watched and known. No more
Can we observe what's lost at any time,
When things wax old with eld and foul decay,
Or when salt seas eat under beetling crags.
Thus Nature ever by unseen bodies works.

THE VOID

But yet creation's neither crammed nor blocked
About by body: there's in things a void —
Which to have known will serve thee many a turn,
Nor will not leave thee wandering in doubt,
Forever searching in the sum of all,
And losing faith in these pronouncements mine.
There's place intangible, a void and room.
For were it not, things could in nowise move;
Since body's property to block and check
Would work on all and at an times the same.
Thus naught could evermore push forth and go,
Since naught elsewhere would yield a starting place.
But now through oceans, lands, and heights of heaven,
By divers causes and in divers modes,

Before our eyes we mark how much may move,
Which, finding not a void, would fail deprived
Of stir and motion; nay, would then have been
Nowise begot at all, since matter, then,
Had staid at rest, its parts together crammed.
Then too, however solid objects seem,
They yet are formed of matter mixed with void:
In rocks and caves the watery moisture seeps,
And beady drops stand out like plenteous tears;
And food finds way through every frame that lives;
The trees increase and yield the season's fruit
Because their food throughout the whole is poured,
Even from the deepest roots, through trunks and boughs;
And voices pass the solid walls and fly
Reverberant through shut doorways of a house;
And stiffening frost seeps inward to our bones.
Which but for voids for bodies to go through
'Tis clear could happen in nowise at all.
Again, why see we among objects some
Of heavier weight, but of no bulkier size?
Indeed, if in a ball of wool there be
As much of body as in lump of lead,
The two should weigh alike, since body tends
To load things downward, while the void abides,
By contrary nature, the imponderable.
Therefore, an object just as large but lighter
Declares infallibly its more of void;
Even as the heavier more of matter shows,
And how much less of vacant room inside.
That which we're seeking with sagacious quest
Exists, infallibly, commixed with things —
The void, the invisible inane.

Right here

I am compelled a question to expound,
Forestalling something certain folk suppose,
Lest it avail to lead thee off from truth:
Waters (they say) before the shining breed
Of the swift scaly creatures somehow give,
And straightway open sudden liquid paths,
Because the fishes leave behind them room
To which at once the yielding billows stream.
Thus things among themselves can yet be moved,
And change their place, however full the Sum —

Received opinion, wholly false forsooth.
For where can scaly creatures forward dart,
Save where the waters give them room? Again,
Where can the billows yield a way, so long
As ever the fish are powerless to go?
Thus either all bodies of motion are deprived,
Or things contain admixture of a void
Where each thing gets its start in moving on.

Lastly, where after impact two broad bodies
Suddenly spring apart, the air must crowd
The whole new void between those bodies formed;
But air, however it stream with hastening gusts,
Can yet not fill the gap at once — for first
It makes for one place, ere diffused through all.
And then, if haply any think this comes,
When bodies spring apart, because the air
Somehow condenses, wander they from truth:
For then a void is formed, where none before;
And, too, a void is filled which was before.
Nor can air be condensed in such a wise;
Nor, granting it could, without a void, I hold,
It still could not contract upon itself
And draw its parts together into one.
Wherefore, despite demur and counter-speech,
Confess thou must there is a void in things.

And still I might by many an argument
Here scrape together credence for my words.
But for the keen eye these mere footprints serve,
Whereby thou mayest know the rest thyself.
As dogs full oft with noses on the ground,
Find out the silent lairs, though hid in brush,
Of beasts, the mountain-rangers, when but once
They scent the certain footsteps of the way,
Thus thou thyself in themes like these alone
Can hunt from thought to thought, and keenly wind
Along even onward to the secret places
And drag out truth. But, if thou loiter loth
Or veer, however little, from the point,
This I can promise, Memmius, for a fact:
Such copious drafts my singing tongue shall pour
From the large well-springs of my plenished breast
That much I dread slow age will steal and coil
Along our members, and unloose the gates

Of life within us, ere for thee my verse
Hath put within thine ears the stores of proofs
At hand for one soever question broached.

NOTHING EXISTS per se EXCEPT ATOMS AND THE VOID

But, now again to weave the tale begun,
All nature, then, as self-sustained, consists
Of twain of things: of bodies and of void
In which they're set, and where they're moved around.
For common instinct of our race declares
That body of itself exists: unless
This primal faith, deep-founded, fail us not,
Naught will there be whereunto to appeal
On things occult when seeking aught to prove
By reasonings of mind. Again, without
That place and room, which we do call the inane,
Nowhere could bodies then be set, nor go
Hither or thither at all — as shown before.
Besides, there's naught of which thou canst declare
It lives disjoined from body, shut from void —
A kind of third in nature. For whatever
Exists must be a somewhat; and the same,
If tangible, however fight and slight,
Will yet increase the count of body's sum,
With its own augmentation big or small;
But, if intangible and powerless ever
To keep a thing from passing through itself
On any side, 'twill be naught else but that
Which we do call the empty, the inane.
Again, whate'er exists, as of itself,
Must either act or suffer action on it,
Or else be that wherein things move and be:
Naught, saving body, acts, is acted on;
Naught but the inane can furnish room. And thus,
Beside the inane and bodies, is no third
Nature amid the number of all things —
Remainder none to fall at any time
Under our senses, nor be seized and seen
By any man through reasonings of mind.
Name o'er creation with what names thou wilt,
Thou'lt find but properties of those first twain,
Or see but accidents those twain produce.

A property is that which not at all

Can be disjoined and severed from a thing
Without a fatal dissolution: such,
Weight to the rocks, heat to the fire, and flow
To the wide waters, touch to corporal things,
Intangibility to the viewless void.
But state of slavery, pauperhood, and wealth,
Freedom, and war, and concord, and all else
Which come and go whilst nature stands the same,
We're wont, and rightly, to call accidents.
Even time exists not of itself; but sense
Reads out of things what happened long ago,
What presses now, and what shall follow after:
No man, we must admit, feels time itself,
Disjoined from motion and repose of things.
Thus, when they say there "is" the ravishment
Of Princess Helen, "is" the siege and sack
Of Trojan Town, look out, they force us not
To admit these acts existent by themselves,
Merely because those races of mankind
(Of whom these acts were accidents) long since
Irrevocable age has borne away:
For all past actions may be said to be
But accidents, in one way, of mankind, —
In other, of some region of the world.
Add, too, had been no matter, and no room
Wherein all things go on, the fire of love
Upblown by that fair form, the glowing coal
Under the Phrygian Alexander's breast,
Had ne'er enkindled that renowned strife
Of savage war, nor had the wooden horse
Involved in flames old Pergama, by a birth
At midnight of a brood of the Hellenes.
And thus thou canst remark that every act
At bottom exists not of itself, nor is
As body is, nor has like name with void;
But rather of sort more fitly to be called
An accident of body, and of place
Wherein all things go on.

CHARACTER OF THE ATOMS

Bodies, again,
Are partly primal germs of things, and partly
Unions deriving from the primal germs.
And those which are the primal germs of things

No power can quench; for in the end they conquer
By their own solidness; though hard it be
To think that aught in things has solid frame;
For lightnings pass, no less than voice and shout,
Through hedging walls of houses, and the iron
White-dazzles in the fire, and rocks will burn
With exhalations fierce and burst asunder.
Totters the rigid gold dissolved in heat;
The ice of bronze melts conquered in the flame;
Warmth and the piercing cold through silver seep,
Since, with the cups held rightly in the hand,
We oft feel both, as from above is poured
The dew of waters between their shining sides:
So true it is no solid form is found.
But yet because true reason and nature of things
Constrain us, come, whilst in few verses now
I disentangle how there still exist
Bodies of solid, everlasting frame —
The seeds of things, the primal germs we teach,
Whence all creation around us came to be.
First since we know a twofold nature exists,
Of things, both twain and utterly unlike —
Body, and place in which an things go on —
Then each must be both for and through itself,
And all unmixed: where'er be empty space,
There body's not; and so where body bides,
There not at all exists the void inane.
Thus primal bodies are solid, without a void.
But since there's void in all begotten things,
All solid matter must be round the same;
Nor, by true reason canst thou prove aught hides
And holds a void within its body, unless
Thou grant what holds it be a solid. Know,
That which can hold a void of things within
Can be naught else than matter in union knit.
Thus matter, consisting of a solid frame,
Hath power to be eternal, though all else,
Though all creation, be dissolved away.
Again, were naught of empty and inane,
The world were then a solid; as, without
Some certain bodies to fill the places held,
The world that is were but a vacant void.
And so, infallibly, alternate-wise
Body and void are still distinguished,

Since nature knows no wholly full nor void.
There are, then, certain bodies, possessed of power
To vary forever the empty and the full;
And these can nor be sundered from without
By beats and blows, nor from within be torn
By penetration, nor be overthrown
By any assault soever through the world —
For without void, naught can be crushed, it seems,
Nor broken, nor severed by a cut in twain,
Nor can it take the damp, or seeping cold
Or piercing fire, those old destroyers three;
But the more void within a thing, the more
Entirely it totters at their sure assault.
Thus if first bodies be, as I have taught,
Solid, without a void, they must be then
Eternal; and, if matter ne'er had been
Eternal, long ere now had all things gone
Back into nothing utterly, and all
We see around from nothing had been born —
But since I taught above that naught can be
From naught created, nor the once begotten
To naught be summoned back, these primal germs
Must have an immortality of frame.
And into these must each thing be resolved,
When comes its supreme hour, that thus there be
At hand the stuff for plenishing the world.

So primal germs have solid singleness
Nor otherwise could they have been conserved
Through aeons and infinity of time
For the replenishment of wasted worlds.
Once more, if nature had given a scope for things
To be forever broken more and more,
By now the bodies of matter would have been
So far reduced by breakings in old days
That from them nothing could, at season fixed,
Be born, and arrive its prime and top of life.
For, lo, each thing is quicker marred than made;
And so whate'er the long infinitude
Of days and all fore-passed time would now
By this have broken and ruined and dissolved,
That same could ne'er in all remaining time
Be builded up for plenishing the world.
But mark: infallibly a fixed bound

Remaineth stablished 'gainst their breaking down;
Since we behold each thing soever renewed,
And unto all, their seasons, after their kind,
Wherein they arrive the flower of their age.

Again, if bounds have not been set against
The breaking down of this corporeal world,
Yet must all bodies of whatever things
Have still endured from everlasting time
Unto this present, as not yet assailed
By shocks of peril. But because the same
Are, to thy thinking, of a nature frail,
It ill accords that thus they could remain
(As thus they do) through everlasting time,
Vexed through the ages (as indeed they are)
By the innumerable blows of chance.

So in our programme of creation, mark
How 'tis that, though the bodies of all stuff
Are solid to the core, we yet explain
The ways whereby some things are fashioned soft —
Air, water, earth, and fiery exhalations —
And by what force they function and go on:
The fact is founded in the void of things.
But if the primal germs themselves be soft,
Reason cannot be brought to bear to show
The ways whereby may be created these
Great crags of basalt and the during iron;
For their whole nature will profoundly lack
The first foundations of a solid frame.
But powerful in old simplicity,
Abide the solid, the primeval germs;
And by their combinations more condensed,
All objects can be tightly knit and bound
And made to show unconquerable strength.
Again, since all things kind by kind obtain
Fixed bounds of growing and conserving life;
Since Nature hath inviolably decreed
What each can do, what each can never do;
Since naught is changed, but all things so abide
That ever the variegated birds reveal
The spots or stripes peculiar to their kind,
Spring after spring: thus surely all that is
Must be composed of matter immutable.
For if the primal germs in any wise

Were open to conquest and to change, 'twould be
Uncertain also what could come to birth
And what could not, and by what law to each
Its scope prescribed, its boundary stone that clings
So deep in Time. Nor could the generations
Kind after kind so often reproduce
The nature, habits, motions, ways of life,
Of their progenitors.

And then again,
Since there is ever an extreme bounding point

Of that first body which our senses now
Cannot perceive: That bounding point indeed
Exists without all parts, a minimum
Of nature, nor was e'er a thing apart,
As of itself, — nor shall hereafter be,
Since 'tis itself still parcel of another,
A first and single part, whence other parts
And others similar in order lie
In a packed phalanx, filling to the full
The nature of first body: being thus
Not self-existent, they must cleave to that
From which in nowise they can sundered be.
So primal germs have solid singleness,
Which tightly packed and closely joined cohere
By virtue of their minim particles —
No compound by mere union of the same;
But strong in their eternal singleness,
Nature, reserving them as seeds for things,
Permitteth naught of rupture or decrease.

Moreover, were there not a minimum,
The smallest bodies would have infinites,
Since then a half-of-half could still be halved,
With limitless division less and less.
Then what the difference 'twixt the sum and least?
None: for however infinite the sum,
Yet even the smallest would consist the same
Of infinite parts. But since true reason here
Protests, denying that the mind can think it,
Convinced thou must confess such things there are
As have no parts, the minimums of nature.
And since these are, likewise confess thou must
That primal bodies are solid and eterne.

Again, if Nature, creatress of all things,
Were wont to force all things to be resolved
Unto least parts, then would she not avail
To reproduce from out them anything;
Because whate'er is not endowed with parts
Cannot possess those properties required
Of generative stuff — divers connections,
Weights, blows, encounters, motions, whereby things
Forevermore have being and go on.

CONFUTATION OF OTHER PHILOSOPHERS

And on such grounds it is that those who held
The stuff of things is fire, and out of fire
Alone the cosmic sum is formed, are seen
Mightily from true reason to have lapsed.
Of whom, chief leader to do battle, comes
That Heraclitus, famous for dark speech
Among the silly, not the serious Greeks
Who search for truth. For dolts are ever prone
That to bewonder and adore which hides
Beneath distorted words, holding that true
Which sweetly tickles in their stupid ears,
Or which is rouged in finely finished phrase.
For how, I ask, can things so varied be,
If formed of fire, single and pure? No whit
'Twould help for fire to be condensed or thinned,
If all the parts of fire did still preserve
But fire's own nature, seen before in gross.
The heat were keener with the parts compressed,
Milder, again, when severed or dispersed —
And more than this thou canst conceive of naught
That from such causes could become; much less
Might earth's variety of things be born
From any fires soever, dense or rare.
This too: if they suppose a void in things,
Then fires can be condensed and still left rare;
But since they see such opposites of thought
Rising against them, and are loath to leave
An unmixed void in things, they fear the steep
And lose the road of truth. Nor do they see,
That, if from things we take away the void,
All things are then condensed, and out of all
One body made, which has no power to dart
Swiftly from out itself not anything —

As throws the fire its light and warmth around,
Giving thee proof its parts are not compact.
But if perhaps they think, in other wise,
Fires through their combinations can be quenched
And change their substance, very well: behold,
If fire shall spare to do so in no part,
Then heat will perish utterly and all,
And out of nothing would the world be formed.
For change in anything from out its bounds
Means instant death of that which was before;
And thus a somewhat must persist unharmed
Amid the world, lest all return to naught,
And, born from naught, abundance thrive anew.
Now since indeed there are those surest bodies
Which keep their nature evermore the same,
Upon whose going out and coming in
And changed order things their nature change,
And all corporeal substances transformed,
'Tis thine to know those primal bodies, then,
Are not of fire. For 'twere of no avail
Should some depart and go away, and some
Be added new, and some be changed in order,
If still all kept their nature of old heat:
For whatsoever they created then
Would still in any case be only fire.
The truth, I fancy, this: bodies there are
Whose clashings, motions, order, posture, shapes
Produce the fire and which, by order changed,
Do change the nature of the thing produced,
And are thereafter nothing like to fire
Nor whatso else has power to send its bodies
With impact touching on the senses' touch.

Again, to say that all things are but fire
And no true thing in number of all things
Exists but fire, as this same fellow says,
Seems crazed folly. For the man himself
Against the senses by the senses fights,
And hews at that through which is all belief,
Through which indeed unto himself is known
The thing he calls the fire. For, though he thinks
The senses truly can perceive the fire,
He thinks they cannot as regards all else,
Which still are palpably as clear to sense —

To me a thought inept and crazy too.
For whither shall we make appeal? for what
More certain than our senses can there be
Whereby to mark asunder error and truth?
Besides, why rather do away with all,
And wish to allow heat only, then deny
The fire and still allow all else to be? —
Alike the madness either way it seems.
Thus whosoe'er have held the stuff of things
To be but fire, and out of fire the sum,
And whosoever have constituted air
As first beginning of begotten things,
And all whoever have held that of itself
Water alone contrives things, or that earth
Createth all and changes things anew
To divers natures, mightily they seem
A long way to have wandered from the truth.

Add, too, whoever make the primal stuff
Twofold, by joining air to fire, and earth
To water; add who deem that things can grow
Out of the four — fire, earth, and breath, and rain;
As first Empedocles of Acragas,
Whom that three-cornered isle of all the lands
Bore on her coasts, around which flows and flows
In mighty bend and bay the Ionic seas,
Splashing the brine from off their gray-green waves.
Here, billowing onward through the narrow straits,
Swift ocean cuts her boundaries from the shores
Of the Italic mainland. Here the waste
Charybdis; and here Aetna rumbles threats
To gather anew such furies of its flames
As with its force anew to vomit fires,
Belched from its throat, and skyward bear anew
Its lightnings' flash. And though for much she seem
The mighty and the wondrous isle to men,
Most rich in all good things, and fortified
With generous strength of heroes, she hath ne'er
Possessed within her aught of more renown,
Nor aught more holy, wonderful, and dear
Than this true man. Nay, ever so far and pure
The lofty music of his breast divine
Lifts up its voice and tells of glories found,
That scarce he seems of human stock create.

Yet he and those forementioned (known to be
So far beneath him, less than he in all),
Though, as discoverers of much goodly truth,
They gave, as 'twere from out of the heart's own shrine,
Responses holier and soundlier based
Than ever the Pythia pronounced for men
From out the triped and the Delphian laurel,
Have still in matter of first-elements
Made ruin of themselves, and, great men, great
Indeed and heavy there for them the fall:
First, because, banishing the void from things,
They yet assign them motion, and allow
Things soft and loosely textured to exist,
As air, dew, fire, earth, animals, and grains,
Without admixture of void amid their frame.
Next, because, thinking there can be no end
In cutting bodies down to less and less
Nor pause established to their breaking up,
They hold there is no minimum in things;
Albeit we see the boundary point of aught
Is that which to our senses seems its least,
Whereby thou mayst conjecture, that, because
The things thou canst not mark have boundary points,
They surely have their minimums. Then, too,
Since these philosophers ascribe to things
Soft primal germs, which we behold to be
Of birth and body mortal, thus, throughout,
The sum of things must be returned to naught,
And, born from naught, abundance thrive anew —
Thou seest how far each doctrine stands from truth.
And, next, these bodies are among themselves
In many ways poisons and foes to each,
Wherefore their congress will destroy them quite
Or drive asunder as we see in storms
Rains, winds, and lightnings all asunder fly.

Thus too, if all things are create of four,
And all again dissolved into the four,
How can the four be called the primal germs
Of things, more than all things themselves be thought,
By retroversion, primal germs of them?
For ever alternately are both begot,
With interchange of nature and aspect
From immemorial time. But if percase

Thou think'st the frame of fire and earth, the air,
The dew of water can in such wise meet
As not by mingling to resign their nature,
From them for thee no world can be create —
No thing of breath, no stock or stalk of tree:
In the wild congress of this varied heap
Each thing its proper nature will display,
And air will palpably be seen mixed up
With earth together, unquenched heat with water.
But primal germs in bringing things to birth
Must have a latent, unseen quality,
Lest some outstanding alien element
Confuse and minish in the thing create
Its proper being.

But these men begin
From heaven, and from its fires; and first they feign
That fire will turn into the winds of air,
Next, that from air the rain begotten is,
And earth created out of rain, and then
That all, reversely, are returned from earth —
The moisture first, then air thereafter heat —
And that these same ne'er cease in interchange,
To go their ways from heaven to earth, from earth
Unto the stars of the aethereal world —
Which in no wise at all the germs can do.
Since an immutable somewhat still must be,
Lest all things utterly be sped to naught;
For change in anything from out its bounds
Means instant death of that which was before.
Wherefore, since those things, mentioned heretofore,
Suffer a changed state, they must derive
From others ever unconvertible,
Lest an things utterly return to naught.
Then why not rather presuppose there be
Bodies with such a nature furnished forth
That, if perchance they have created fire,
Can still (by virtue of a few withdrawn,
Or added few, and motion and order changed)
Fashion the winds of air, and thus all things
Forevermore be interchanged with all?

“But facts in proof are manifest,” thou sayest,
“That all things grow into the winds of air
And forth from earth are nourished, and unless

The season favour at propitious hour
With rains enough to set the trees a-reel
Under the soak of bulking thunderheads,
And sun, for its share, foster and give heat,
No grains, nor trees, nor breathing things can grow.”
True — and unless hard food and moisture soft
Recruited man, his frame would waste away,
And life dissolve from out his thews and bones;
For out of doubt recruited and fed are we
By certain things, as other things by others.
Because in many ways the many germs
Common to many things are mixed in things,
No wonder 'tis that therefore divers things
By divers things are nourished. And, again,
Often it matters vastly with what others,
In what positions the primordial germs
Are bound together, and what motions, too,
They give and get among themselves; for these
Same germs do put together sky, sea, lands,
Rivers, and sun, grains, trees, and breathing things,
But yet commixed they are in divers modes
With divers things, forever as they move.
Nay, thou beholdest in our verses here
Elements many, common to many worlds,
Albeit thou must confess each verse, each word
From one another differs both in sense
And ring of sound — so much the elements
Can bring about by change of order alone.
But those which are the primal germs of things
Have power to work more combinations still,
Whence divers things can be produced in turn.

Now let us also take for scrutiny
The homeomeria of Anaxagoras,
So called by Greeks, for which our pauper-speech
Yieldeth no name in the Italian tongue,
Although the thing itself is not o'erhard
For explanation. First, then, when he speaks
Of this homeomeria of things, he thinks
Bones to be sprung from littlest bones minute,
And from minute and littlest flesh all flesh,
And blood created out of drops of blood,
Conceiving gold compact of grains of gold,
And earth concreted out of bits of earth,

Fire made of fires, and water out of waters,
Feigning the like with all the rest of stuff.
Yet he concedes not any void in things,
Nor any limit to cutting bodies down.
Wherefore to me he seems on both accounts
To err no less than those we named before.
Add too: these germs he feigns are far too frail —
If they be germs primordial furnished forth
With but same nature as the things themselves,
And travail and perish equally with those,
And no rein curbs them from annihilation.
For which will last against the grip and crush
Under the teeth of death? the fire? the moist?
Or else the air? which then? the blood? the bones?
No one, methinks, when every thing will be
At bottom as mortal as whate'er we mark
To perish by force before our gazing eyes.
But my appeal is to the proofs above
That things cannot fall back to naught, nor yet
From naught increase. And now again, since food
Augments and nourishes the human frame,
'Tis thine to know our veins and blood and bones
And thews are formed of particles unlike
To them in kind; or if they say all foods
Are of mixed substance having in themselves
Small bodies of thews, and bones, and also veins
And particles of blood, then every food,
Solid or liquid, must itself be thought
As made and mixed of things unlike in kind —
Of bones, of thews, of ichor and of blood.
Again, if all the bodies which upgrow
From earth, are first within the earth, then earth
Must be compound of alien substances.
Which spring and bloom abroad from out the earth.
Transfer the argument, and thou may'st use
The selfsame words: if flame and smoke and ash
Still lurk unseen within the wood, the wood
Must be compound of alien substances
Which spring from out the wood.

Right here remains
A certain slender means to skulk from truth,
Which Anaxagoras takes unto himself,
Who holds that all things lurk commixed with all

While that one only comes to view, of which
The bodies exceed in number all the rest,
And lie more close to hand and at the fore —
A notion banished from true reason far.
For then 'twere meet that kernels of the grains
Should oft, when crunched between the might of stones,
Give forth a sign of blood, or of aught else
Which in our human frame is fed; and that
Rock rubbed on rock should yield a gory ooze.
Likewise the herbs ought oft to give forth drops
Of sweet milk, flavoured like the uddered sheep's;
Indeed we ought to find, when crumbling up
The earthy clods, there herbs, and grains, and leaves,
All sorts dispersed minutely in the soil;
Lastly we ought to find in cloven wood
Ashes and smoke and bits of fire there hid.
But since fact teaches this is not the case,
'Tis thine to know things are not mixed with things
Thuswise; but seeds, common to many things,
Commixed in many ways, must lurk in things.

"But often it happens on skiey hills" thou sayest,
"That neighbouring tops of lofty trees are rubbed
One against other, smote by the blustering south,
Till all ablaze with bursting flower of flame."
Good sooth — yet fire is not ingraft in wood,
But many are the seeds of heat, and when
Rubbing together they together flow,
They start the conflagrations in the forests.
Whereas if flame, already fashioned, lay
Stored up within the forests, then the fires
Could not for any time be kept unseen,
But would be laying all the wildwood waste
And burning all the boscase. Now dost see
(Even as we said a little space above)
How mightily it matters with what others,
In what positions these same primal germs
Are bound together? And what motions, too,
They give and get among themselves? how, hence,
The same, if altered 'mongst themselves, can body
Both igneous and ligneous objects forth —
Precisely as these words themselves are made
By somewhat altering their elements,
Although we mark with name indeed distinct

The igneous from the ligneous. Once again,
If thou suppose whatever thou beholdest,
Among all visible objects, cannot be,
Unless thou feign bodies of matter endowed
With a like nature, — by thy vain device
For thee will perish all the germs of things:
‘Twill come to pass they’ll laugh aloud, like men,
Shaken asunder by a spasm of mirth,
Or moisten with salty tear-drops cheeks and chins.

THE INFINITY OF THE UNIVERSE

Now learn of what remains! More keenly hear!
And for myself, my mind is not deceived
How dark it is: But the large hope of praise
Hath strook with pointed thyrsus through my heart;
On the same hour hath strook into my breast
Sweet love of the Muses, wherewith now instinct,
I wander afield, thriving in sturdy thought,
Through unpathed haunts of the Pierides,
Trodden by step of none before. I joy
To come on undefiled fountains there,
To drain them deep; I joy to pluck new flowers,
To seek for this my head a signal crown
From regions where the Muses never yet
Have garlanded the temples of a man:
First, since I teach concerning mighty things,
And go right on to loose from round the mind
The tightened coils of dread religion;
Next, since, concerning themes so dark, I frame
Songs so pellucid, touching all throughout
Even with the Muses’ charm — which, as ’twould seem,
Is not without a reasonable ground:
But as physicians, when they seek to give
Young boys the nauseous wormwood, first do touch
The brim around the cup with the sweet juice
And yellow of the honey, in order that
The thoughtless age of boyhood be cajoled
As far as the lips, and meanwhile swallow down
The wormwood’s bitter draught, and, though befooled,
Be yet not merely duped, but rather thus
Grow strong again with recreated health:
So now I too (since this my doctrine seems
In general somewhat woeful unto those
Who’ve had it not in hand, and since the crowd

Starts back from it in horror) have desired
To expound our doctrine unto thee in song
Soft-speaking and Pierian, and, as 'twere,
To touch it with sweet honey of the Muse —
If by such method haply I might hold
The mind of thee upon these lines of ours,
Till thou see through the nature of all things,
And how exists the interwoven frame.

But since I've taught that bodies of matter, made
Completely solid, hither and thither fly
Forevermore unconquered through all time,
Now come, and whether to the sum of them
There be a limit or be none, for thee
Let us unfold; likewise what has been found
To be the wide inane, or room, or space
Wherein all things soever do go on,
Let us examine if it finite be
All and entire, or reach unmeasured round
And downward an illimitable profound.

Thus, then, the All that is is limited
In no one region of its onward paths,
For then 't must have forever its beyond.
And a beyond 'tis seen can never be
For aught, unless still further on there be
A somewhat somewhere that may bound the same —
So that the thing be seen still on to where
The nature of sensation of that thing
Can follow it no longer. Now because
Confess we must there's naught beside the sum,
There's no beyond, and so it lacks all end.
It matters nothing where thou post thyself,
In whatsoever regions of the same;
Even any place a man has set him down
Still leaves about him the unbounded all
Outward in all directions; or, supposing
A moment the all of space finite to be,
If some one farthest traveller runs forth
Unto the extreme coasts and throws ahead
A flying spear, is't then thy wish to think
It goes, hurled off amain, to where 'twas sent
And shoots afar, or that some object there
Can thwart and stop it? For the one or other
Thou must admit and take. Either of which

Shuts off escape for thee, and does compel
That thou concede the all spreads everywhere,
Owning no confines. Since whether there be
Aught that may block and check it so it comes
Not where 'twas sent, nor lodges in its goal,
Or whether borne along, in either view
'Thas started not from any end. And so
I'll follow on, and whereso'er thou set
The extreme coasts, I'll query, "what becomes
Thereafter of thy spear?" 'Twill come to pass
That nowhere can a world's-end be, and that
The chance for further flight prolongs forever
The flight itself. Besides, were all the space
Of the totality and sum shut in
With fixed coasts, and bounded everywhere,
Then would the abundance of world's matter flow
Together by solid weight from everywhere
Still downward to the bottom of the world,
Nor aught could happen under cope of sky,
Nor could there be a sky at all or sun —
Indeed, where matter all one heap would lie,
By having settled during infinite time.
But in reality, repose is given
Unto no bodies 'mongst the elements,
Because there is no bottom whereunto
They might, as 'twere, together flow, and where
They might take up their undisturbed abodes.
In endless motion everything goes on
Forevermore; out of all regions, even
Out of the pit below, from forth the vast,
Are hurtled bodies evermore supplied.
The nature of room, the space of the abyss
Is such that even the flashing thunderbolts
Can neither speed upon their courses through,
Gliding across eternal tracts of time,
Nor, further, bring to pass, as on they run,
That they may bate their journeying one whit:
Such huge abundance spreads for things around —
Room off to every quarter, without end.
Lastly, before our very eyes is seen
Thing to bound thing: air hedges hill from hill,
And mountain walls hedge air; land ends the sea,
And sea in turn all lands; but for the All
Truly is nothing which outside may bound.

That, too, the sum of things itself may not
Have power to fix a measure of its own,
Great nature guards, she who compels the void
To bound all body, as body all the void,
Thus rendering by these alternates the whole
An infinite; or else the one or other,
Being unbounded by the other, spreads,
Even by its single nature, ne'ertheless
Immeasurably forth....

Nor sea, nor earth, nor shining vaults of sky,
Nor breed of mortals, nor holy limbs of gods
Could keep their place least portion of an hour:
For, driven apart from out its meetings fit,
The stock of stuff, dissolved, would be borne
Along the illimitable inane afar,
Or rather, in fact, would ne'er have once combined
And given a birth to aught, since, scattered wide,
It could not be united. For of truth
Neither by counsel did the primal germs
'Stablish themselves, as by keen act of mind,
Each in its proper place; nor did they make,
Forsooth, a compact how each germ should move;
But since, being many and changed in many modes
Along the All, they're driven abroad and vexed
By blow on blow, even from all time of old,
They thus at last, after attempting all
The kinds of motion and conjoining, come
Into those great arrangements out of which
This sum of things established is create,
By which, moreover, through the mighty years,
It is preserved, when once it has been thrown
Into the proper motions, bringing to pass
That ever the streams refresh the greedy main
With river-waves abounding, and that earth,
Lapped in warm exhalations of the sun,
Renews her broods, and that the lusty race
Of breathing creatures bears and blooms, and that
The gliding fires of ether are alive —
What still the primal germs nowise could do,
Unless from out the infinite of space
Could come supply of matter, whence in season
They're wont whatever losses to repair.
For as the nature of breathing creatures wastes,
Losing its body, when deprived of food:

So all things have to be dissolved as soon
As matter, diverted by what means soever
From off its course, shall fail to be on hand.
Nor can the blows from outward still conserve,
On every side, whatever sum of a world
Has been united in a whole. They can
Indeed, by frequent beating, check a part,
Till others arriving may fulfil the sum;
But meanwhile often are they forced to spring
Rebounding back, and, as they spring, to yield,
Unto those elements whence a world derives,
Room and a time for flight, permitting them
To be from off the massy union borne
Free and afar. Wherefore, again, again:
Needs must there come a many for supply;
And also, that the blows themselves shall be
Unfailing ever, must there ever be
An infinite force of matter all sides round.

And in these problems, shrink, my Memmius, far
From yielding faith to that notorious talk:
That all things inward to the centre press;
And thus the nature of the world stands firm
With never blows from outward, nor can be
Nowhere parted — since all height and depth
Have always inward to the centre pressed
(If thou art ready to believe that aught
Itself can rest upon itself); or that
The ponderous bodies which be under earth
Do all press upwards and do come to rest
Upon the earth, in some way upside down,
Like to those images of things we see
At present through the waters. They contend,
With like procedure, that all breathing things
Head downward roam about, and yet cannot
Tumble from earth to realms of sky below,
No more than these our bodies wing away
Spontaneously to vaults of sky above;
That, when those creatures look upon the sun,
We view the constellations of the night;
And that with us the seasons of the sky
They thus alternately divide, and thus
Do pass the night coequal to our days,
But a vain error has given these dreams to fools,

Which they've embraced with reasoning perverse
For centre none can be where world is still
Boundless, nor yet, if now a centre were,
Could aught take there a fixed position more
Than for some other cause 'tmight be dislodged.
For all of room and space we call the void
Must both through centre and non-centre yield
Alike to weights where'er their motions tend.
Nor is there any place, where, when they've come,
Bodies can be at standstill in the void,
Deprived of force of weight; nor yet may void
Furnish support to any, — nay, it must,
True to its bent of nature, still give way.
Thus in such manner not at all can things
Be held in union, as if overcome
By craving for a centre.

But besides,
Seeing they feign that not all bodies press
To centre inward, rather only those
Of earth and water (liquid of the sea,
And the big billows from the mountain slopes,
And whatsoever are encased, as 'twere,
In earthen body), contrariwise, they teach
How the thin air, and with it the hot fire,
Is borne asunder from the centre, and how,
For this all ether quivers with bright stars,
And the sun's flame along the blue is fed
(Because the heat, from out the centre flying,
All gathers there), and how, again, the boughs
Upon the tree-tops could not sprout their leaves,
Unless, little by little, from out the earth
For each were nutriment...

Lest, after the manner of the winged flames,
The ramparts of the world should flee away,
Dissolved amain throughout the mighty void,
And lest all else should likewise follow after,
Aye, lest the thundering vaults of heaven should burst
And splinter upward, and the earth forthwith
Withdraw from under our feet, and all its bulk,
Among its mingled wrecks and those of heaven,
With slipping asunder of the primal seeds,
Should pass, along the immeasurable inane,
Away forever, and, that instant, naught

Of wrack and remnant would be left, beside
The desolate space, and germs invisible.
For on whatever side thou deemest first
The primal bodies lacking, lo, that side
Will be for things the very door of death:
Wherethrough the throng of matter all will dash,
Out and abroad.

These points, if thou wilt ponder,
Then, with but paltry trouble led along...

For one thing after other will grow clear,
Nor shall the blind night rob thee of the road,
To hinder thy gaze on nature's Farthest-forth.
Thus things for things shall kindle torches new.

BOOK II

PROEM

'Tis sweet, when, down the mighty main, the winds
Roll up its waste of waters, from the land
To watch another's labouring anguish far,
Not that we joyously delight that man
Should thus be smitten, but because 'tis sweet
To mark what evils we ourselves be spared;
'Tis sweet, again, to view the mighty strife
Of armies embattled yonder o'er the plains,
Ourselves no sharers in the peril; but naught
There is more goodly than to hold the high
Serene plateaus, well fortified by the wise,
Whence thou may'st look below on other men
And see them ev'rywhere wand'ring, all dispersed
In their lone seeking for the road of life;
Rivals in genius, or emulous in rank,
Pressing through days and nights with hugest toil
For summits of power and mastery of the world.
O wretched minds of men! O blinded hearts!
In how great perils, in what darks of life
Are spent the human years, however brief! —
O not to see that nature for herself
Barks after nothing, save that pain keep off,
Disjoined from the body, and that mind enjoy
Delightful feeling, far from care and fear!
Therefore we see that our corporeal life
Needs little, altogether, and only such
As takes the pain away, and can besides
Strew underneath some number of delights.
More grateful 'tis at times (for nature craves
No artifice nor luxury), if forsooth
There be no golden images of boys
Along the halls, with right hands holding out
The lamps ablaze, the lights for evening feasts,
And if the house doth glitter not with gold
Nor gleam with silver, and to the lyre resound
No fretted and gilded ceilings overhead,
Yet still to lounge with friends in the soft grass
Beside a river of water, underneath
A big tree's boughs, and merrily to refresh

Our frames, with no vast outlay — most of all
If the weather is laughing and the times of the year
Besprinkle the green of the grass around with flowers.
Nor yet the quicker will hot fevers go,
If on a pictured tapestry thou toss,
Or purple robe, than if 'tis thine to lie
Upon the poor man's bedding. Wherefore, since
Treasure, nor rank, nor glory of a reign
Avail us naught for this our body, thus
Reckon them likewise nothing for the mind:
Save then perchance, when thou beholdest forth
Thy legions swarming round the Field of Mars,
Rousing a mimic warfare — either side
Strengthened with large auxiliaries and horse,
Alike equipped with arms, alike inspired;
Or save when also thou beholdest forth
Thy fleets to swarm, deploying down the sea:
For then, by such bright circumstance abashed,
Religion pales and flees thy mind; O then
The fears of death leave heart so free of care.
But if we note how all this pomp at last
Is but a drollery and a mocking sport,
And of a truth man's dread, with cares at heels,
Dreads not these sounds of arms, these savage swords
But among kings and lords of all the world
Mingles undaunted, nor is overawed
By gleam of gold nor by the splendour bright
Of purple robe, canst thou then doubt that this
Is aught, but power of thinking? — when, besides
The whole of life but labours in the dark.
For just as children tremble and fear all
In the viewless dark, so even we at times
Dread in the light so many things that be
No whit more fearsome than what children feign,
Shuddering, will be upon them in the dark.
This terror then, this darkness of the mind,
Not sunrise with its flaring spokes of light,
Nor glittering arrows of morning can disperse,
But only nature's aspect and her law.

ATOMIC MOTIONS

Now come: I will untangle for thy steps
Now by what motions the begetting bodies
Of the world-stuff beget the varied world,

And then forever resolve it when begot,
And by what force they are constrained to this,
And what the speed appointed unto them
Wherewith to travel down the vast inane:
Do thou remember to yield thee to my words.
For truly matter coheres not, crowds not tight,
Since we behold each thing to wane away,
And we observe how all flows on and off,
As 'twere, with age-old time, and from our eyes
How eld withdraws each object at the end,
Albeit the sum is seen to bide the same,
Unharm'd, because these notes that leave each thing
Diminish what they part from, but endow
With increase those to which in turn they come,
Constraining these to wither in old age,
And those to flower at the prime (and yet
Biding not long among them). Thus the sum
Forever is replenished, and we live
As mortals by eternal give and take.
The nations wax, the nations wane away;
In a brief space the generations pass,
And like to runners hand the lamp of life
One unto other.

But if thou believe
That the primordial germs of things can stop,
And in their stopping give new motions birth,
Afar thou wanderest from the road of truth.
For since they wander through the void inane,
All the primordial germs of things must needs
Be borne along, either by weight their own,
Or haply by another's blow without.
For, when, in their incessancy so oft
They meet and clash, it comes to pass amain
They leap asunder, face to face: not strange —
Being most hard, and solid in their weights,
And naught opposing motion, from behind.
And that more clearly thou perceive how all
These mites of matter are darted round about,
Recall to mind how nowhere in the sum
Of All exists a bottom, — nowhere is
A realm of rest for primal bodies; since
(As amply shown and proved by reason sure)
Space has no bound nor measure, and extends

Unmetered forth in all directions round.
Since this stands certain, thus 'tis out of doubt
No rest is rendered to the primal bodies
Along the unfathomable inane; but rather,
Inveterately plied by motions mixed,
Some, at their jamming, bound aback and leave
Huge gaps between, and some from off the blow
Are hurried about with spaces small between.
And all which, brought together with slight gaps,
In more condensed union bound aback,
Linked by their own all inter-tangled shapes, —
These form the irrefragable roots of rocks
And the brute bulks of iron, and what else
Is of their kind...

The rest leap far asunder, far recoil,
Leaving huge gaps between: and these supply
For us thin air and splendour-lights of the sun.
And many besides wander the mighty void —
Cast back from unions of existing things,
Nowhere accepted in the universe,
And nowise linked in motions to the rest.
And of this fact (as I record it here)
An image, a type goes on before our eyes
Present each moment; for behold whenever
The sun's light and the rays, let in, pour down
Across dark halls of houses: thou wilt see
The many mites in many a manner mixed
Amid a void in the very light of the rays,
And battling on, as in eternal strife,
And in battalions contending without halt,
In meetings, partings, harried up and down.
From this thou mayest conjecture of what sort
The ceaseless tossing of primordial seeds
Amid the mightier void — at least so far
As small affair can for a vaster serve,
And by example put thee on the spoor
Of knowledge. For this reason too 'tis fit
Thou turn thy mind the more unto these bodies
Which here are witnessed tumbling in the light:
Namely, because such tumblings are a sign
That motions also of the primal stuff
Secret and viewless lurk beneath, behind.
For thou wilt mark here many a speck, impelled
By viewless blows, to change its little course,

And beaten backwards to return again,
Hither and thither in all directions round.
Lo, all their shifting movement is of old,
From the primeval atoms; for the same
Primordial seeds of things first move of self,
And then those bodies built of unions small
And nearest, as it were, unto the powers
Of the primeval atoms, are stirred up
By impulse of those atoms' unseen blows,
And these thereafter goad the next in size:
Thus motion ascends from the primevals on,
And stage by stage emerges to our sense,
Until those objects also move which we
Can mark in sunbeams, though it not appears
What blows do urge them.

Herein wonder not

How 'tis that, while the seeds of things are all
Moving forever, the sum yet seems to stand
Supremely still, except in cases where
A thing shows motion of its frame as whole.
For far beneath the ken of senses lies
The nature of those ultimates of the world;
And so, since those themselves thou canst not see,
Their motion also must they veil from men —
For mark, indeed, how things we can see, oft
Yet hide their motions, when afar from us
Along the distant landscape. Often thus,
Upon a hillside will the woolly flocks
Be cropping their goodly food and creeping about
Whither the summons of the grass, begemmed
With the fresh dew, is calling, and the lambs,
Well filled, are frisking, locking horns in sport:
Yet all for us seem blurred and blent afar —
A glint of white at rest on a green hill.
Again, when mighty legions, marching round,
Fill all the quarters of the plains below,
Rousing a mimic warfare, there the sheen
Shoots up the sky, and all the fields about
Glitter with brass, and from beneath, a sound
Goes forth from feet of stalwart soldiery,
And mountain walls, smote by the shouting, send
The voices onward to the stars of heaven,
And hither and thither darts the cavalry,

And of a sudden down the midmost fields
Charges with onset stout enough to rock
The solid earth: and yet some post there is
Up the high mountains, viewed from which they seem
To stand — a gleam at rest along the plains.

Now what the speed to matter's atoms given
Thou mayest in few, my Memmius, learn from this:
When first the dawn is sprinkling with new light
The lands, and all the breed of birds abroad
Flit round the trackless forests, with liquid notes
Filling the regions along the mellow air,
We see 'tis forthwith manifest to man
How suddenly the risen sun is wont
At such an hour to overspread and clothe
The whole with its own splendour; but the sun's
Warm exhalations and this serene light
Travel not down an empty void; and thus
They are compelled more slowly to advance,
Whilst, as it were, they cleave the waves of air;
Nor one by one travel these particles
Of the warm exhalations, but are all
Entangled and enmassed, whereby at once
Each is restrained by each, and from without
Checked, till compelled more slowly to advance.
But the primordial atoms with their old
Simple solidity, when forth they travel
Along the empty void, all undelayed
By aught outside them there, and they, each one
Being one unit from nature of its parts,
Are borne to that one place on which they strive
Still to lay hold, must then, beyond a doubt,
Outstrip in speed, and be more swiftly borne
Than light of sun, and over regions rush,
Of space much vaster, in the self-same time
The sun's effulgence widens round the sky.

Nor to pursue the atoms one by one,
To see the law whereby each thing goes on.
But some men, ignorant of matter, think,
Opposing this, that not without the gods,
In such adjustment to our human ways,
Can nature change the seasons of the years,
And bring to birth the grains and all of else
To which divine Delight, the guide of life,

Persuades mortality and leads it on,
That, through her artful blandishments of love,
It propagate the generations still,
Lest humankind should perish. When they feign
That gods have stablished all things but for man,
They seem in all ways mightily to lapse
From reason's truth: for ev'n if ne'er I knew
What seeds primordial are, yet would I dare
This to affirm, ev'n from deep judgment based
Upon the ways and conduct of the skies —
This to maintain by many a fact besides —
That in no wise the nature of the world
For us was builded by a power divine —
So great the faults it stands encumbered with:
The which, my Memmius, later on, for thee
We will clear up. Now as to what remains
Concerning motions we'll unfold our thought.

Now is the place, meseems, in these affairs
To prove for thee this too: nothing corporeal
Of its own force can e'er be upward borne,
Or upward go — nor let the bodies of flames
Deceive thee here: for they engendered are
With urge to upwards, taking thus increase,
Whereby grow upwards shining grains and trees,
Though all the weight within them downward bears.
Nor, when the fires will leap from under round
The roofs of houses, and swift flame laps up
Timber and beam, 'tis then to be supposed
They act of own accord, no force beneath
To urge them up. 'Tis thus that blood, discharged
From out our bodies, spurts its jets aloft
And spatters gore. And hast thou never marked
With what a force the water will disgorge
Timber and beam? The deeper, straight and down,
We push them in, and, many though we be,
The more we press with main and toil, the more
The water vomits up and flings them back,
That, more than half their length, they there emerge,
Rebounding. Yet we never doubt, meseems,
That all the weight within them downward bears
Through empty void. Well, in like manner, flames
Ought also to be able, when pressed out,
Through winds of air to rise aloft, even though

The weight within them strive to draw them down.
Hast thou not seen, sweeping so far and high,
The meteors, midnight flambeaus of the sky,
How after them they draw long trails of flame
Wherever Nature gives a thoroughfare?
How stars and constellations drop to earth,
Seest not? Nay, too, the sun from peak of heaven
Sheds round to every quarter its large heat,
And sows the new-ploughed intervalles with light:
Thus also sun's heat downward tends to earth.
Athwart the rain thou seest the lightning fly;
Now here, now there, bursting from out the clouds,
The fires dash zig-zag — and that flaming power
Falls likewise down to earth.

In these affairs

We wish thee also well aware of this:
The atoms, as their own weight bears them down
Plumb through the void, at scarce determined times,
In scarce determined places, from their course
Decline a little — call it, so to speak,
Mere changed trend. For were it not their wont
Thuswise to swerve, down would they fall, each one,
Like drops of rain, through the unbottomed void;
And then collisions ne'er could be nor blows
Among the primal elements; and thus
Nature would never have created aught.

But, if perchance be any that believe
The heavier bodies, as more swiftly borne
Plumb down the void, are able from above
To strike the lighter, thus engendering blows
Able to cause those procreant motions, far
From highways of true reason they retire.
For whatsoever through the waters fall,
Or through thin air, must quicken their descent,
Each after its weight — on this account, because
Both bulk of water and the subtle air
By no means can retard each thing alike,
But give more quick before the heavier weight;
But contrariwise the empty void cannot,
On any side, at any time, to aught
Oppose resistance, but will ever yield,
True to its bent of nature. Wherefore all,
With equal speed, though equal not in weight,

Must rush, borne downward through the still inane.
Thus ne'er at all have heavier from above
Been swift to strike the lighter, gendering strokes
Which cause those divers motions, by whose means
Nature transacts her work. And so I say,
The atoms must a little swerve at times —
But only the least, lest we should seem to feign
Motions oblique, and fact refute us there.
For this we see forthwith is manifest:
Whatever the weight, it can't obliquely go,
Down on its headlong journey from above,
At least so far as thou canst mark; but who
Is there can mark by sense that naught can swerve
At all aside from off its road's straight line?

Again, if ev'r all motions are co-linked,
And from the old ever arise the new
In fixed order, and primordial seeds
Produce not by their swerving some new start
Of motion to sunder the covenants of fate,
That cause succeed not cause from everlasting,
Whence this free will for creatures o'er the lands,
Whence is it wrested from the fates, — this will
Whereby we step right forward where desire
Leads each man on, whereby the same we swerve
In motions, not as at some fixed time,
Nor at some fixed line of space, but where
The mind itself has urged? For out of doubt
In these affairs 'tis each man's will itself
That gives the start, and hence throughout our limbs
Incipient motions are diffused. Again,
Dost thou not see, when, at a point of time,
The bars are opened, how the eager strength
Of horses cannot forward break as soon
As pants their mind to do? For it behooves
That all the stock of matter, through the frame,
Be roused, in order that, through every joint,
Aroused, it press and follow mind's desire;
So thus thou seest initial motion's gendered
From out the heart, aye, verily, proceeds
First from the spirit's will, whence at the last
'Tis given forth through joints and body entire.
Quite otherwise it is, when forth we move,
Impelled by a blow of another's mighty powers

And mighty urge; for then 'tis clear enough
All matter of our total body goes,
Hurried along, against our own desire —
Until the will has pulled upon the reins
And checked it back, throughout our members all;
At whose arbitrament indeed sometimes
The stock of matter's forced to change its path,
Throughout our members and throughout our joints,
And, after being forward cast, to be
Reined up, whereat it settles back again.
So seest thou not, how, though external force
Drive men before, and often make them move,
Onward against desire, and headlong snatched,
Yet is there something in these breasts of ours
Strong to combat, strong to withstand the same? —
Wherefore no less within the primal seeds
Thou must admit, besides all blows and weight,
Some other cause of motion, whence derives
This power in us inborn, of some free act. —
Since naught from nothing can become, we see.
For weight prevents all things should come to pass
Through blows, as 'twere, by some external force;
But that man's mind itself in all it does
Hath not a fixed necessity within,
Nor is not, like a conquered thing, compelled
To bear and suffer, — this state comes to man
From that slight swervement of the elements
In no fixed line of space, in no fixed time.

Nor ever was the stock of stuff more crammed,
Nor ever, again, sundered by bigger gaps:
For naught gives increase and naught takes away;
On which account, just as they move to-day,
The elemental bodies moved of old
And shall the same hereafter evermore.
And what was wont to be begot of old
Shall be begotten under selfsame terms
And grow and thrive in power, so far as given
To each by Nature's changeless, old decrees.
The sum of things there is no power can change,
For naught exists outside, to which can flee
Out of the world matter of any kind,
Nor forth from which a fresh supply can spring,
Break in upon the founded world, and change

Whole nature of things, and turn their motions about.

ATOMIC FORMS AND THEIR COMBINATIONS

Now come, and next hereafter apprehend
What sorts, how vastly different in form,
How varied in multitudinous shapes they are —
These old beginnings of the universe;
Not in the sense that only few are furnished
With one like form, but rather not at all
In general have they likeness each with each,
No marvel: since the stock of them's so great
That there's no end (as I have taught) nor sum,
They must indeed not one and all be marked
By equal outline and by shape the same.

Moreover, humankind, and the mute flocks
Of scaly creatures swimming in the streams,
And joyous herds around, and all the wild,
And all the breeds of birds — both those that teem
In gladsome regions of the water-haunts,
About the river-banks and springs and pools,
And those that throng, flitting from tree to tree,
Through trackless woods — Go, take which one thou wilt,
In any kind: thou wilt discover still
Each from the other still unlike in shape.
Nor in no other wise could offspring know
Mother, nor mother offspring — which we see
They yet can do, distinguished one from other,
No less than human beings, by clear signs.
Thus oft before fair temples of the gods,
Beside the incense-burning altars slain,
Drops down the yearling calf, from out its breast
Breathing warm streams of blood; the orphaned mother,
Ranging meanwhile green woodland pastures round,
Knows well the footprints, pressed by cloven hoofs,
With eyes regarding every spot about,
For sight somewhere of youngling gone from her;
And, stopping short, filleth the leafy lanes
With her complaints; and oft she seeks again
Within the stall, pierced by her yearning still.
Nor tender willows, nor dew-quicken'd grass,
Nor the loved streams that glide along low banks,
Can lure her mind and turn the sudden pain;
Nor other shapes of calves that graze thereby

Distract her mind or lighten pain the least —
So keen her search for something known and hers.
Moreover, tender kids with bleating throats
Do know their horned dams, and butting lambs
The flocks of sheep, and thus they patter on,
Unfailingly each to its proper teat,
As nature intends. Lastly, with any grain,
Thou'lt see that no one kernel in one kind
Is so far like another, that there still
Is not in shapes some difference running through.
By a like law we see how earth is pied
With shells and conchs, where, with soft waves, the sea
Beats on the thirsty sands of curving shores.
Wherefore again, again, since seeds of things
Exist by nature, nor were wrought with hands
After a fixed pattern of one other,
They needs must flitter to and fro with shapes
In types dissimilar to one another.

Easy enough by thought of mind to solve
Why fires of lightning more can penetrate
Than these of ours from pitch-pine born on earth.
For thou canst say lightning's celestial fire,
So subtle, is formed of figures finer far,
And passes thus through holes which this our fire,
Born from the wood, created from the pine,
Cannot. Again, light passes through the horn
On the lantern's side, while rain is dashed away.
And why? — unless those bodies of light should be
Finer than those of water's genial showers.
We see how quickly through a colander
The wines will flow; how, on the other hand,
The sluggish olive-oil delays: no doubt,
Because 'tis wrought of elements more large,
Or else more crook'd and intertangled. Thus
It comes that the primordials cannot be
So suddenly sundered one from other, and seep,
One through each several hole of anything.

And note, besides, that liquor of honey or milk
Yields in the mouth agreeable taste to tongue,
Whilst nauseous wormwood, pungent centaury,
With their foul flavour set the lips awry;
Thus simple 'tis to see that whatsoever
Can touch the senses pleasingly are made

Of smooth and rounded elements, whilst those
Which seem the bitter and the sharp, are held
Entwined by elements more crook'd, and so
Are wont to tear their ways into our senses,
And rend our body as they enter in.
In short all good to sense, all bad to touch,
Being up-built of figures so unlike,
Are mutually at strife — lest thou suppose
That the shrill rasping of a squeaking saw
Consists of elements as smooth as song
Which, waked by nimble fingers, on the strings
The sweet musicians fashion; or suppose
That same-shaped atoms through men's nostrils pierce
When foul cadavers burn, as when the stage
Is with Cilician saffron sprinkled fresh,
And the altar near exhales Panchaeian scent;
Or hold as of like seed the goodly hues
Of things which feast our eyes, as those which sting
Against the smarting pupil and draw tears,
Or show, with gruesome aspect, grim and vile.
For never a shape which charms our sense was made
Without some elemental smoothness; whilst
Whate'er is harsh and irksome has been framed
Still with some roughness in its elements.
Some, too, there are which justly are supposed
To be nor smooth nor altogether hooked,
With bended barbs, but slightly angled-out,
To tickle rather than to wound the sense —
And of which sort is the salt tartar of wine
And flavours of the gummed elecampane.
Again, that glowing fire and icy rime
Are fanged with teeth unlike whereby to sting
Our body's sense, the touch of each gives proof.
For touch — by sacred majesties of Gods! —
Touch is indeed the body's only sense —
Be't that something in-from-outward works,
Be't that something in the body born
Wounds, or delighteth as it passes out
Along the procreant paths of Aphrodite;
Or be't the seeds by some collision whirl
Disordered in the body and confound
By tumult and confusion all the sense —
As thou mayst find, if haply with the hand
Thyself thou strike thy body's any part.

On which account, the elemental forms
Must differ widely, as enabled thus
To cause diverse sensations.

And, again,
What seems to us the hardened and condensed
Must be of atoms among themselves more hooked,
Be held compacted deep within, as 'twere
By branch-like atoms — of which sort the chief
Are diamond stones, despisers of all blows,
And stalwart flint and strength of solid iron,
And brazen bars, which, budging hard in locks,
Do grate and scream. But what are liquid, formed
Of fluid body, they indeed must be
Of elements more smooth and round — because
Their globules severally will not cohere:
To suck the poppy-seeds from palm of hand
Is quite as easy as drinking water down,
And they, once struck, roll like unto the same.
But that thou seest among the things that flow
Some bitter, as the brine of ocean is,
Is not the least a marvel...
For since 'tis fluid, smooth its atoms are
And round, with painful rough ones mixed therein;
Yet need not these be held together hooked:
In fact, though rough, they're globular besides,
Able at once to roll, and rasp the sense.
And that the more thou mayst believe me here,
That with smooth elements are mixed the rough
(Whence Neptune's salt astringent body comes),
There is a means to separate the twain,
And thereupon dividedly to see
How the sweet water, after filtering through
So often underground, flows freshened forth
Into some hollow; for it leaves above
The primal germs of nauseating brine,
Since cling the rough more readily in earth.
Lastly, whatso thou markest to disperse
Upon the instant — smoke, and cloud, and flame —
Must not (even though not all of smooth and round)
Be yet co-linked with atoms intertwined,
That thus they can, without together cleaving,
So pierce our body and so bore the rocks.
Whatever we see...

Given to senses, that thou must perceive
They're not from linked but pointed elements.

The which now having taught, I will go on
To bind thereto a fact to this allied
And drawing from this its proof: these primal germs
Vary, yet only with finite tale of shapes.
For were these shapes quite infinite, some seeds
Would have a body of infinite increase.
For in one seed, in one small frame of any,
The shapes can't vary from one another much.
Assume, we'll say, that of three minim parts
Consist the primal bodies, or add a few:
When, now, by placing all these parts of one
At top and bottom, changing lefts and rights,
Thou hast with every kind of shift found out
What the aspect of shape of its whole body
Each new arrangement gives, for what remains,
If thou percase wouldst vary its old shapes,
New parts must then be added; follows next,
If thou percase wouldst vary still its shapes,
That by like logic each arrangement still
Requires its increment of other parts.
Ergo, an augmentation of its frame
Follows upon each novelty of forms.
Wherefore, it cannot be thou'lt undertake
That seeds have infinite differences in form,
Lest thus thou forcest some indeed to be
Of an immeasurable immensity —
Which I have taught above cannot be proved.

And now for thee barbaric robes, and gleam
Of Meliboean purple, touched with dye
Of the Thessalian shell...
The peacock's golden generations, stained
With spotted gaities, would lie o'erthrown
By some new colour of new things more bright;
The odour of myrrh and savours of honey despised;
The swan's old lyric, and Apollo's hymns,
Once modulated on the many chords,
Would likewise sink o'er mastered and be mute:
For, lo, a somewhat, finer than the rest,
Would be arising evermore. So, too,
Into some baser part might all retire,
Even as we said to better might they come:

For, lo, a somewhat, loathlier than the rest
To nostrils, ears, and eyes, and taste of tongue,
Would then, by reasoning reversed, be there.
Since 'tis not so, but unto things are given
Their fixed limitations which do bound
Their sum on either side, 't must be confessed
That matter, too, by finite tale of shapes
Does differ. Again, from earth's midsummer heats
Unto the icy hoar-frosts of the year
The forward path is fixed, and by like law
O'ertravelled backwards at the dawn of spring.
For each degree of hot, and each of cold,
And the half-warm, all filling up the sum
In due progression, lie, my Memmius, there
Betwixt the two extremes: the things create
Must differ, therefore, by a finite change,
Since at each end marked off they ever are
By fixed point — on one side plagued by flames
And on the other by congealing frosts.

The which now having taught, I will go on
To bind thereto a fact to this allied
And drawing from this its proof: those primal germs
Which have been fashioned all of one like shape
Are infinite in tale; for, since the forms
Themselves are finite in divergences,
Then those which are alike will have to be
Infinite, else the sum of stuff remains
A finite — what I've proved is not the fact,
Showing in verse how corpuscles of stuff,
From everlasting and to-day the same,
Uphold the sum of things, all sides around
By old succession of unending blows.
For though thou view'st some beasts to be more rare,
And mark'st in them a less prolific stock,
Yet in another region, in lands remote,
That kind abounding may make up the count;
Even as we mark among the four-foot kind
Snake-handed elephants, whose thousands wall
With ivory ramparts India about,
That her interiors cannot entered be —
So big her count of brutes of which we see
Such few examples. Or suppose, besides,
We feign some thing, one of its kind and sole

With body born, to which is nothing like
In all the lands: yet now unless shall be
An infinite count of matter out of which
Thus to conceive and bring it forth to life,
It cannot be created and — what's more —
It cannot take its food and get increase.
Yea, if through all the world in finite tale
Be tossed the procreant bodies of one thing,
Whence, then, and where in what mode, by what power,
Shall they to meeting come together there,
In such vast ocean of matter and tumult strange? —
No means they have of joining into one.
But, just as, after mighty ship-wrecks piled,
The mighty main is wont to scatter wide
The rowers' banks, the ribs, the yards, the prow,
The masts and swimming oars, so that afar
Along all shores of lands are seen afloat
The carven fragments of the rended poop,
Giving a lesson to mortality
To shun the ambush of the faithless main,
The violence and the guile, and trust it not
At any hour, however much may smile
The crafty enticements of the placid deep:
Exactly thus, if once thou holdest true
That certain seeds are finite in their tale,
The various tides of matter, then, must needs
Scatter them flung throughout the ages all,
So that not ever can they join, as driven
Together into union, nor remain
In union, nor with increment can grow —
But facts in proof are manifest for each:
Things can be both begotten and increase.
'Tis therefore manifest that primal germs,
Are infinite in any class thou wilt —
From whence is furnished matter for all things.

Nor can those motions that bring death prevail
Forever, nor eternally entomb
The welfare of the world; nor, further, can
Those motions that give birth to things and growth
Keep them forever when created there.
Thus the long war, from everlasting waged,
With equal strife among the elements
Goes on and on. Now here, now there, prevail

The vital forces of the world — or fall.
Mixed with the funeral is the wildered wail
Of infants coming to the shores of light:
No night a day, no dawn a night hath followed
That heard not, mingling with the small birth-cries,
The wild laments, companions old of death
And the black rites.

 This, too, in these affairs
'Tis fit thou hold well sealed, and keep consigned
With no forgetting brain: nothing there is
Whose nature is apparent out of hand
That of one kind of elements consists —
Nothing there is that's not of mixed seed.
And whatsoe'er possesses in itself
More largely many powers and properties
Shows thus that here within itself there are
The largest number of kinds and differing shapes
Of elements. And, chief of all, the earth
Hath in herself first bodies whence the springs,
Rolling chill waters, renew forevermore
The unmeasured main; hath whence the fires arise —
For burns in many a spot her flamed crust,
Whilst the impetuous Aetna raves indeed
From more profounder fires — and she, again,
Hath in herself the seed whence she can raise
The shining grains and gladsome trees for men;
Whence, also, rivers, fronds, and gladsome pastures
Can she supply for mountain-roaming beasts.
Wherefore great mother of gods, and mother of beasts,
And parent of man hath she alone been named.

Her hymned the old and learned bards of Greece

Seated in chariot o'er the realms of air
To drive her team of lions, teaching thus
That the great earth hangs poised and cannot lie
Resting on other earth. Unto her car
They've yoked the wild beasts, since a progeny,
However savage, must be tamed and chid
By care of parents. They have girt about
With turret-crown the summit of her head,
Since, fortified in her goodly strongholds high,
'Tis she sustains the cities; now, adorned
With that same token, to-day is carried forth,

With solemn awe through many a mighty land,
The image of that mother, the divine.
Her the wide nations, after antique rite,
Do name Idaean Mother, giving her
Escort of Phrygian bands, since first, they say,
From out those regions 'twas that grain began
Through all the world. To her do they assign
The Galli, the emasculate, since thus
They wish to show that men who violate
The majesty of the mother and have proved
Ingrate to parents are to be adjudged
Unfit to give unto the shores of light
A living progeny. The Galli come:
And hollow cymbals, tight-skinned tambourines
Resound around to bangings of their hands;
The fierce horns threaten with a raucous bray;
The tubed pipe excites their maddened minds
In Phrygian measures; they bear before them knives,
Wild emblems of their frenzy, which have power
The rabble's ingrate heads and impious hearts
To panic with terror of the goddess' might.
And so, when through the mighty cities borne,
She blesses man with salutations mute,
They strew the highway of her journeyings
With coin of brass and silver, gifting her
With alms and largesse, and shower her and shade
With flowers of roses falling like the snow
Upon the Mother and her companion-bands.
Here is an armed troop, the which by Greeks
Are called the Phrygian Curetes. Since
Haply among themselves they use to play
In games of arms and leap in measure round
With bloody mirth and by their nodding shake
The terrorizing crests upon their heads,
This is the armed troop that represents
The arm'd Dictaeon Curetes, who, in Crete,
As runs the story, whilom did out-drown
That infant cry of Zeus, what time their band,
Young boys, in a swift dance around the boy,
To measured step beat with the brass on brass,
That Saturn might not get him for his jaws,
And give its mother an eternal wound
Along her heart. And 'tis on this account
That armed they escort the mighty Mother,

Or else because they signify by this
That she, the goddess, teaches men to be
Eager with armed valour to defend
Their motherland, and ready to stand forth,
The guard and glory of their parents' years.
A tale, however beautifully wrought,
That's wide of reason by a long remove:
For all the gods must of themselves enjoy
Immortal aeons and supreme repose,
Withdrawn from our affairs, detached, afar:
Immune from peril and immune from pain,
Themselves abounding in riches of their own,
Needing not us, they are not touched by wrath
They are not taken by service or by gift.
Truly is earth insensate for all time;
But, by obtaining germs of many things,
In many a way she brings the many forth
Into the light of sun. And here, whoso
Decides to call the ocean Neptune, or
The grain-crop Ceres, and prefers to abuse
The name of Bacchus rather than pronounce
The liquor's proper designation, him
Let us permit to go on calling earth
Mother of Gods, if only he will spare
To taint his soul with foul religion.
So, too, the wooly flocks, and horned kine,
And brood of battle-eager horses, grazing
Often together along one grassy plain,
Under the cope of one blue sky, and slaking
From out one stream of water each its thirst,
All live their lives with face and form unlike,
Keeping the parents' nature, parents' habits,
Which, kind by kind, through ages they repeat.
So great in any sort of herb thou wilt,
So great again in any river of earth
Are the distinct diversities of matter.
Hence, further, every creature — any one
From out them all — compounded is the same
Of bones, blood, veins, heat, moisture, flesh, and thews —
All differing vastly in their forms, and built
Of elements dissimilar in shape.
Again, all things by fire consumed ablaze,
Within their frame lay up, if naught besides,
At least those atoms whence derives their power

To throw forth fire and send out light from under,
To shoot the sparks and scatter embers wide.
If, with like reasoning of mind, all else
Thou traverse through, thou wilt discover thus
That in their frame the seeds of many things
They hide, and divers shapes of seeds contain.
Further, thou markest much, to which are given
Along together colour and flavour and smell,
Among which, chief, are most burnt offerings.

Thus must they be of divers shapes composed.
A smell of scorching enters in our frame
Where the bright colour from the dye goes not;
And colour in one way, flavour in quite another
Works inward to our senses — so mayst see
They differ too in elemental shapes.
Thus unlike forms into one mass combine,
And things exist by intermixed seed.

But still 't must not be thought that in all ways
All things can be conjoined; for then wouldst view
Portents begot about thee every side:
Hulks of mankind half brute astarting up,
At times big branches sprouting from man's trunk,
Limbs of a sea-beast to a land-beast knit,
And nature along the all-producing earth
Feeding those dire Chimaeras breathing flame
From hideous jaws — Of which 'tis simple fact
That none have been begot; because we see
All are from fixed seed and fixed dam
Engendered and so function as to keep
Throughout their growth their own ancestral type.
This happens surely by a fixed law:
For from all food-stuff, when once eaten down,
Go sundered atoms, suited to each creature,
Throughout their bodies, and, conjoining there,
Produce the proper motions; but we see
How, contrariwise, nature upon the ground
Throws off those foreign to their frame; and many
With viewless bodies from their bodies fly,
By blows impelled — those impotent to join
To any part, or, when inside, to accord
And to take on the vital motions there.
But think not, haply, living forms alone
Are bound by these laws: they distinguished all.

For just as all things of creation are,
In their whole nature, each to each unlike,
So must their atoms be in shape unlike —
Not since few only are fashioned of like form,
But since they all, as general rule, are not
The same as all. Nay, here in these our verses,
Elements many, common to many words,
Thou seest, though yet 'tis needful to confess
The words and verses differ, each from each,
Compounded out of different elements —
Not since few only, as common letters, run
Through all the words, or no two words are made,
One and the other, from all like elements,
But since they all, as general rule, are not
The same as all. Thus, too, in other things,
Whilst many germs common to many things
There are, yet they, combined among themselves,
Can form new wholes to others quite unlike.
Thus fairly one may say that humankind,
The grains, the gladsome trees, are all made up
Of different atoms. Further, since the seeds
Are different, difference must there also be
In intervening spaces, thoroughfares,
Connections, weights, blows, clashings, motions, all
Which not alone distinguish living forms,
But sunder earth's whole ocean from the lands,
And hold all heaven from the lands away.

ABSENCE OF SECONDARY QUALITIES

Now come, this wisdom by my sweet toil sought
Look thou perceive, lest haply thou shouldst guess
That the white objects shining to thine eyes
Are gendered of white atoms, or the black
Of a black seed; or yet believe that aught
That's steeped in any hue should take its dye
From bits of matter tinct with hue the same.
For matter's bodies own no hue the least —
Or like to objects or, again, unlike.
But, if perchance it seem to thee that mind
Itself can dart no influence of its own
Into these bodies, wide thou wand'rest off.
For since the blind-born, who have ne'er surveyed
The light of sun, yet recognise by touch
Things that from birth had ne'er a hue for them,
'Tis thine to know that bodies can be brought

No less unto the ken of our minds too,
Though yet those bodies with no dye be smeared.
Again, ourselves whatever in the dark
We touch, the same we do not find to be
Tinctured with any colour.

Now that here
I win the argument, I next will teach

Now, every colour changes, none except,
And every...
Which the primordials ought nowise to do.
Since an immutable somewhat must remain,
Lest all things utterly be brought to naught.
For change of anything from out its bounds
Means instant death of that which was before.
Wherefore be mindful not to stain with colour
The seeds of things, lest things return for thee
All utterly to naught.

But now, if seeds
Receive no property of colour, and yet
Be still endowed with variable forms
From which all kinds of colours they beget
And vary (by reason that ever it matters much
With what seeds, and in what positions joined,
And what the motions that they give and get),
Forthwith most easily thou mayst devise
Why what was black of hue an hour ago
Can of a sudden like the marble gleam, —
As ocean, when the high winds have upheaved
Its level plains, is changed to hoary waves
Of marble whiteness: for, thou mayst declare,
That, when the thing we often see as black
Is in its matter then commixed anew,
Some atoms rearranged, and some withdrawn,
And added some, 'tis seen forthwith to turn
Glowing and white. But if of azure seeds
Consist the level waters of the deep,
They could in nowise whiten: for however
Thou shakest azure seeds, the same can never
Pass into marble hue. But, if the seeds —
Which thus produce the ocean's one pure sheen —
Be now with one hue, now another dyed,
As oft from alien forms and divers shapes

A cube's produced all uniform in shape,
'Twould be but natural, even as in the cube
We see the forms to be dissimilar,
That thus we'd see in brightness of the deep
(Or in whatever one pure sheen thou wilt)
Colours diverse and all dissimilar.
Besides, the unlike shapes don't thwart the least
The whole in being externally a cube;
But differing hues of things do block and keep
The whole from being of one resultant hue.
Then, too, the reason which entices us
At times to attribute colours to the seeds
Falls quite to pieces, since white things are not
Create from white things, nor are black from black,
But evermore they are create from things
Of divers colours. Verily, the white
Will rise more readily, is sooner born
Out of no colour, than of black or aught
Which stands in hostile opposition thus.

Besides, since colours cannot be, sans light,
And the primordials come not forth to light,
'Tis thine to know they are not clothed with colour —
Truly, what kind of colour could there be
In the viewless dark? Nay, in the light itself
A colour changes, gleaming variedly,
When smote by vertical or slanting ray.
Thus in the sunlight shows the down of doves
That circles, garlanding, the nape and throat:
Now it is ruddy with a bright gold-bronze,
Now, by a strange sensation it becomes
Green-emerald blended with the coral-red.
The peacock's tail, filled with the copious light,
Changes its colours likewise, when it turns.
Wherefore, since by some blow of light begot,
Without such blow these colours can't become.

And since the pupil of the eye receives
Within itself one kind of blow, when said
To feel a white hue, then another kind,
When feeling a black or any other hue,
And since it matters nothing with what hue
The things thou touchest be perchance endowed,
But rather with what sort of shape equipped,
'Tis thine to know the atoms need not colour,

But render forth sensations, as of touch,
That vary with their varied forms.

Besides,

Since special shapes have not a special colour,
And all formations of the primal germs
Can be of any sheen thou wilt, why, then,
Are not those objects which are of them made
Suffused, each kind with colours of every kind?
For then 'twere meet that ravens, as they fly,
Should dartle from white pinions a white sheen,
Or swans turn black from seed of black, or be
Of any single varied dye thou wilt.

Again, the more an object's rent to bits,
The more thou see its colour fade away
Little by little till 'tis quite extinct;
As happens when the gaudy linen's picked
Shred after shred away: the purple there,
Phoenician red, most brilliant of all dyes,
Is lost asunder, ravelled thread by thread;
Hence canst perceive the fragments die away
From out their colour, long ere they depart
Back to the old primordials of things.
And, last, since thou concededest not all bodies
Send out a voice or smell, it happens thus
That not to all thou givest sounds and smells.
So, too, since we behold not all with eyes,
'Tis thine to know some things there are as much
Orphaned of colour, as others without smell,
And reft of sound; and those the mind alert
No less can apprehend than it can mark
The things that lack some other qualities.

But think not haply that the primal bodies
Remain despoiled alone of colour: so,
Are they from warmth dissevered and from cold
And from hot exhalations; and they move,
Both sterile of sound and dry of juice; and throw
Not any odour from their proper bodies.
Just as, when undertaking to prepare
A liquid balm of myrrh and marjoram,
And flower of nard, which to our nostrils breathes
Odour of nectar, first of all behooves
Thou seek, as far as find thou may and can,

The inodorous olive-oil (which never sends
One whiff of scent to nostrils), that it may
The least debauch and ruin with sharp tang
The odorous essence with its body mixed
And in it seethed. And on the same account
The primal germs of things must not be thought
To furnish colour in begetting things,
Nor sound, since pow'rless they to send forth aught
From out themselves, nor any flavour, too,
Nor cold, nor exhalation hot or warm.

The rest; yet since these things are mortal all —
The pliant mortal, with a body soft;
The brittle mortal, with a crumbling frame;
The hollow with a porous-all must be
Disjoined from the primal elements,
If still we wish under the world to lay
Immortal ground-works, whereupon may rest
The sum of weal and safety, lest for thee
All things return to nothing utterly.

Now, too: whate'er we see possessing sense
Must yet confessedly be stablished all
From elements insensate. And those signs,
So clear to all and witnessed out of hand,
Do not refute this dictum nor oppose;
But rather themselves do lead us by the hand,
Compelling belief that living things are born
Of elements insensate, as I say.
Sooth, we may see from out the stinking dung
Live worms spring up, when, after soaking rains,
The drenched earth rots; and all things change the same:
Lo, change the rivers, the fronds, the gladsome pastures
Into the cattle, the cattle their nature change
Into our bodies, and from our body, oft
Grow strong the powers and bodies of wild beasts
And mighty-winged birds. Thus nature changes
All foods to living frames, and procreates
From them the senses of live creatures all,
In manner about as she uncoils in flames
Dry logs of wood and turns them all to fire.
And seest not, therefore, how it matters much
After what order are set the primal germs,
And with what other germs they all are mixed,
And what the motions that they give and get?

But now, what is't that strikes thy sceptic mind,
Constraining thee to sundry arguments
Against belief that from insensate germs
The sensible is gendered? — Verily,
'Tis this: that liquids, earth, and wood, though mixed,
Are yet unable to gender vital sense.
And, therefore, 'twill be well in these affairs
This to remember: that I have not said
Senses are born, under conditions all,
From all things absolutely which create
Objects that feel; but much it matters here
Firstly, how small the seeds which thus compose
The feeling thing, then, with what shapes endowed,
And lastly what they in positions be,
In motions, in arrangements. Of which facts
Naught we perceive in logs of wood and clods;
And yet even these, when sodden by the rains,
Give birth to wormy grubs, because the bodies
Of matter, from their old arrangements stirred
By the new factor, then combine anew
In such a way as genders living things.

Next, they who deem that feeling objects can
From feeling objects be create, and these,
In turn, from others that are wont to feel

When soft they make them; for all sense is linked
With flesh, and thews, and veins — and such, we see,
Are fashioned soft and of a mortal frame.
Yet be't that these can last forever on:
They'll have the sense that's proper to a part,
Or else be judged to have a sense the same
As that within live creatures as a whole.
But of themselves those parts can never feel,
For all the sense in every member back
To something else refers — a severed hand,
Or any other member of our frame,
Itself alone cannot support sensation.
It thus remains they must resemble, then,
Live creatures as a whole, to have the power
Of feeling sensation concordant in each part
With the vital sense; and so they're bound to feel
The things we feel exactly as do we.
If such the case, how, then, can they be named
The primal germs of things, and how avoid

The highways of destruction? — since they be
Mere living things and living things be all
One and the same with mortal. Grant they could,
Yet by their meetings and their unions all,
Naught would result, indeed, besides a throng
And hurly-burly all of living things —
Precisely as men, and cattle, and wild beasts,
By mere conglomeration each with each
Can still beget not anything of new.
But if by chance they lose, inside a body,
Their own sense and another sense take on,
What, then, avails it to assign them that
Which is withdrawn thereafter? And besides,
To touch on proof that we pronounced before,
Just as we see the eggs of feathered fowls
To change to living chicks, and swarming worms
To bubble forth when from the soaking rains
The earth is sodden, sure, sensations all
Can out of non-sensations be begot.

But if one say that sense can so far rise
From non-sense by mutation, or because
Brought forth as by a certain sort of birth,
‘Twill serve to render plain to him and prove
There is no birth, unless there be before
Some formed union of the elements,
Nor any change, unless they be unite.

In first place, senses can’t in body be
Before its living nature’s been begot, —
Since all its stuff, in faith, is held dispersed
About through rivers, air, and earth, and all
That is from earth created, nor has met
In combination, and, in proper mode,
Conjoined into those vital motions which
Kindle the all-perceiving senses — they
That keep and guard each living thing soever.

Again, a blow beyond its nature’s strength
Shatters forthwith each living thing soe’er,
And on it goes confounding all the sense
Of body and mind. For of the primal germs
Are loosed their old arrangements, and, throughout,
The vital motions blocked, — until the stuff,
Shaken profoundly through the frame entire,

Undoes the vital knots of soul from body
And throws that soul, to outward wide-dispersed,
Through all the pores. For what may we surmise
A blow inflicted can achieve besides
Shaking asunder and loosening all apart?
It happens also, when less sharp the blow,
The vital motions which are left are wont
Oft to win out — win out, and stop and still
The uncouth tumults gendered by the blow,
And call each part to its own courses back,
And shake away the motion of death which now
Begins its own dominion in the body,
And kindle anew the senses almost gone.
For by what other means could they the more
Collect their powers of thought and turn again
From very doorways of destruction
Back unto life, rather than pass whereto
They be already well-nigh sped and so
Pass quite away?

Again, since pain is there
Where bodies of matter, by some force stirred up,
Through vitals and through joints, within their seats
Quiver and quake inside, but soft delight,
When they remove unto their place again:
'Tis thine to know the primal germs can be
Assaulted by no pain, nor from themselves
Take no delight; because indeed they are
Not made of any bodies of first things,
Under whose strange new motions they might ache
Or pluck the fruit of any dear new sweet.
And so they must be furnished with no sense.

Once more, if thus, that every living thing
May have sensation, needful 'tis to assign
Sense also to its elements, what then
Of those fixed elements from which mankind
Hath been, by their peculiar virtue, formed?
Of verity, they'll laugh aloud, like men,
Shaken asunder by a spasm of mirth,
Or sprinkle with dewy tear-drops cheeks and chins,
And have the cunning hardihood to say
Much on the composition of the world,
And in their turn inquire what elements
They have themselves, — since, thus the same in kind

As a whole mortal creature, even they
Must also be from other elements,
And then those others from others evermore —
So that thou darest nowhere make a stop.
Oho, I'll follow thee until thou grant
The seed (which here thou say'st speaks, laughs, and

thinks)

Is yet derived out of other seeds
Which in their turn are doing just the same.
But if we see what raving nonsense this,
And that a man may laugh, though not, forsooth,
Compounded out of laughing elements,
And think and utter reason with learn'd speech,
Though not himself compounded, for a fact,
Of sapient seeds and eloquent, why, then,
Cannot those things which we perceive to have
Their own sensation be composed as well
Of intermixed seeds quite void of sense?

INFINITE WORLDS

Once more, we all from seed celestial spring,
To all is that same father, from whom earth,
The fostering mother, as she takes the drops
Of liquid moisture, pregnant bears her broods —
The shining grains, and gladsome shrubs and trees,
And bears the human race and of the wild
The generations all, the while she yields
The foods wherewith all feed their frames and lead
The genial life and propagate their kind;
Wherefore she owneth that maternal name,
By old desert. What was before from earth,
The same in earth sinks back, and what was sent
From shores of ether, that, returning home,
The vaults of sky receive. Nor thus doth death
So far annihilate things that she destroys
The bodies of matter; but she dissipates
Their combinations, and conjoins anew
One element with others; and contrives
That all things vary forms and change their colours
And get sensations and straight give them o'er.
And thus may'st know it matters with what others
And in what structure the primordial germs
Are held together, and what motions they

Among themselves do give and get; nor think
That aught we see hither and thither afloat
Upon the crest of things, and now a birth
And straightway now a ruin, inheres at rest
Deep in the eternal atoms of the world.

Why, even in these our very verses here
It matters much with what and in what order
Each element is set: the same denote
Sky, and the ocean, lands, and streams, and sun;
The same, the grains, and trees, and living things.
And if not all alike, at least the most —
But what distinctions by positions wrought!
And thus no less in things themselves, when once
Around are changed the intervals between,
The paths of matter, its connections, weights,
Blows, clashings, motions, order, structure, shapes,
The things themselves must likewise changed be.

Now to true reason give thy mind for us.
Since here strange truth is putting forth its might
To hit thee in thine ears, a new aspect
Of things to show its front. Yet naught there is
So easy that it standeth not at first
More hard to credit than it after is;
And naught so'er that's great to such degree,
Nor wonderful so far, but all mankind
Little by little abandon their surprise.
Look upward yonder at the bright clear sky
And what it holds — the stars that wander o'er,
The moon, the radiance of the splendour-sun:
Yet all, if now they first for mortals were,
If unforeseen now first asudden shown,
What might there be more wonderful to tell,
What that the nations would before have dared
Less to believe might be? — I fancy, naught —
So strange had been the marvel of that sight.
The which o'erwearied to behold, to-day
None deigns look upward to those lucent realms.
Then, spew not reason from thy mind away,
Beside thyself because the matter's new,
But rather with keen judgment nicely weigh;
And if to thee it then appeareth true,
Render thy hands, or, if 'tis false at last,
Gird thee to combat. For my mind-of-man

Now seeks the nature of the vast Beyond
There on the other side, that boundless sum
Which lies without the ramparts of the world,
Toward which the spirit longs to peer afar,
Toward which indeed the swift elan of thought
Flies unencumbered forth.

Firstly, we find,
Off to all regions round, on either side,
Above, beneath, throughout the universe
End is there none — as I have taught, as too
The very thing of itself declares aloud,
And as from nature of the unbottomed deep
Shines clearly forth. Nor can we once suppose
In any way 'tis likely, (seeing that space
To all sides stretches infinite and free,
And seeds, innumerable in number, in sum
Bottomless, there in many a manner fly,
Bestirred in everlasting motion there),
That only this one earth and sky of ours
Hath been create and that those bodies of stuff,
So many, perform no work outside the same;
Seeing, moreover, this world too hath been
By nature fashioned, even as seeds of things
By innate motion chanced to clash and cling —
After they'd been in many a manner driven
Together at random, without design, in vain —
And as at last those seeds together dwelt,
Which, when together of a sudden thrown,
Should alway furnish the commencements fit
Of mighty things — the earth, the sea, the sky,
And race of living creatures. Thus, I say,
Again, again, 't must be confessed there are
Such congregations of matter elsewhere,
Like this our world which vasty ether holds
In huge embrace.

Besides, when matter abundant
Is ready there, when space on hand, nor object
Nor any cause retards, no marvel 'tis
That things are carried on and made complete,
Perforce. And now, if store of seeds there is
So great that not whole life-times of the living
Can count the tale...
And if their force and nature abide the same,

Able to throw the seeds of things together
Into their places, even as here are thrown
The seeds together in this world of ours,
'Tmust be confessed in other realms there are
Still other worlds, still other breeds of men,
And other generations of the wild.

Hence too it happens in the sum there is
No one thing single of its kind in birth,
And single and sole in growth, but rather it is
One member of some generated race,
Among full many others of like kind.
First, cast thy mind abroad upon the living:
Thou'lt find the race of mountain-ranging wild
Even thus to be, and thus the scions of men
To be begot, and lastly the mute flocks
Of scaled fish, and winged frames of birds.
Wherefore confess we must on grounds the same
That earth, sun, moon, and ocean, and all else,
Exist not sole and single — rather in number
Exceeding number. Since that deeply set
Old boundary stone of life remains for them
No less, and theirs a body of mortal birth
No less, than every kind which here on earth
Is so abundant in its members found.

Which well perceived if thou hold in mind,
Then Nature, delivered from every haughty lord,
And forthwith free, is seen to do all things
Herself and through herself of own accord,
Rid of all gods. For — by their holy hearts
Which pass in long tranquillity of peace
Untroubled ages and a serene life! —
Who hath the power (I ask), who hath the power
To rule the sum of the immeasurable,
To hold with steady hand the giant reins
Of the unfathomed deep? Who hath the power
At once to roll a multitude of skies,
At once to heat with fires ethereal all
The fruitful lands of multitudes of worlds,
To be at all times in all places near,
To stablish darkness by his clouds, to shake
The serene spaces of the sky with sound,
And hurl his lightnings, — ha, and whelm how oft
In ruins his own temples, and to rave,

Retiring to the wildernesses, there
At practice with that thunderbolt of his,
Which yet how often shoots the guilty by,
And slays the honourable blameless ones!

Ere since the birth-time of the world, ere since
The risen first-born day of sea, earth, sun,
Have many germs been added from outside,
Have many seeds been added round about,
Which the great All, the while it flung them on,
Brought hither, that from them the sea and lands
Could grow more big, and that the house of heaven
Might get more room and raise its lofty roofs
Far over earth, and air arise around.

For bodies all, from out all regions, are
Divided by blows, each to its proper thing,
And all retire to their own proper kinds:
The moist to moist retires; earth gets increase
From earthy body; and fires, as on a forge,
Beat out new fire; and ether forges ether;
Till nature, author and ender of the world,
Hath led all things to extreme bound of growth:
As haps when that which hath been poured inside
The vital veins of life is now no more
Than that which ebbs within them and runs off.
This is the point where life for each thing ends;
This is the point where nature with her powers
Curbs all increase. For whatsoe'er thou seest
Grow big with glad increase, and step by step
Climb upward to ripe age, these to themselves
Take in more bodies than they send from selves,
Whilst still the food is easily infused
Through all the veins, and whilst the things are not
So far expanded that they cast away
Such numerous atoms as to cause a waste
Greater than nutriment whereby they wax.
For 't must be granted, truly, that from things
Many a body ebbeth and runs off;
But yet still more must come, until the things
Have touched development's top pinnacle;
Then old age breaks their powers and ripe strength
And falls away into a worser part.
For ever the ampler and more wide a thing,
As soon as ever its augmentation ends,

It scatters abroad forthwith to all sides round
More bodies, sending them from out itself.
Nor easily now is food disseminate
Through all its veins; nor is that food enough
To equal with a new supply on hand
Those plenteous exhalations it gives off.
Thus, fairly, all things perish, when with ebbing
They're made less dense and when from blows without
They are laid low; since food at last will fail
Extremest eld, and bodies from outside
Cease not with thumping to undo a thing
And overmaster by infesting blows.

Thus, too, the ramparts of the mighty world
On all sides round shall taken be by storm,
And tumble to wrack and shivered fragments down.
For food it is must keep things whole, renewing;
'Tis food must prop and give support to all, —
But to no purpose, since nor veins suffice
To hold enough, nor nature ministers
As much as needful. And even now 'tis thus:
Its age is broken and the earth, outworn
With many parturitions, scarce creates
The little lives — she who created erst
All generations and gave forth at birth
Enormous bodies of wild beasts of old.
For never, I fancy, did a golden cord
From off the firmament above let down
The mortal generations to the fields;
Nor sea, nor breakers pounding on the rocks
Created them; but earth it was who bore —
The same to-day who feeds them from herself.
Besides, herself of own accord, she first
The shining grains and vineyards of all joy
Created for mortality; herself
Gave the sweet fruitage and the pastures glad,
Which now to-day yet scarcely wax in size,
Even when aided by our toiling arms.
We break the ox, and wear away the strength
Of sturdy farm-hands; iron tools to-day
Barely avail for tilling of the fields,
So niggardly they grudge our harvestings,
So much increase our labour. Now to-day
The aged ploughman, shaking of his head,

Sighs o'er and o'er that labours of his hands
Have fallen out in vain, and, as he thinks
How present times are not as times of old,
Often he praises the fortunes of his sire,
And crackles, prating, how the ancient race,
Fulfilled with piety, supported life
With simple comfort in a narrow plot,
Since, man for man, the measure of each field
Was smaller far i' the old days. And, again,
The gloomy planter of the withered vine
Rails at the season's change and wearies heaven,
Nor grasps that all of things by sure degrees
Are wasting away and going to the tomb,
Outworn by venerable length of life.

BOOK III

PROEM

O thou who first uplifted in such dark
So clear a torch aloft, who first shed light
Upon the profitable ends of man,
O thee I follow, glory of the Greeks,
And set my footsteps squarely planted now
Even in the impress and the marks of thine —
Less like one eager to dispute the palm,
More as one craving out of very love
That I may copy thee! — for how should swallow
Contend with swans or what compare could be
In a race between young kids with tumbling legs
And the strong might of the horse? Our father thou,
And finder-out of truth, and thou to us
Supplier a father's precepts; and from out
Those scriven leaves of thine, renowned soul
(Like bees that sip of all in flowery wolds),
We feed upon thy golden sayings all —
Golden, and ever worthiest endless life.
For soon as ever thy planning thought that sprang
From god-like mind begins its loud proclaim
Of nature's courses, terrors of the brain
Asunder flee, the ramparts of the world
Dispart away, and through the void entire
I see the movements of the universe.
Rises to vision the majesty of gods,
And their abodes of everlasting calm
Which neither wind may shake nor rain-cloud splash,
Nor snow, congealed by sharp frosts, may harm
With its white downfall: ever, unclouded sky
O'er roofs, and laughs with far-diffused light.
And nature gives to them their all, nor aught
May ever pluck their peace of mind away.
But nowhere to my vision rise no more
The vaults of Acheron, though the broad earth
Bars me no more from gazing down o'er all
Which under our feet is going on below
Along the void. O, here in these affairs
Some new divine delight and trembling awe
Takes hold through me, that thus by power of thine

Nature, so plain and manifest at last,
Hath been on every side laid bare to man!

And since I've taught already of what sort
The seeds of all things are, and how, distinct
In divers forms, they flit of own accord,
Stirred with a motion everlasting on,
And in what mode things be from them create,
Now, after such matters, should my verse, meseems,
Make clear the nature of the mind and soul,
And drive that dread of Acheron without,
Headlong, which so confounds our human life
Unto its deeps, pouring o'er all that is
The black of death, nor leaves not anything
To prosper — a liquid and unsullied joy.
For as to what men sometimes will affirm:
That more than Tartarus (the realm of death)
They fear diseases and a life of shame,
And know the substance of the soul is blood,
Or rather wind (if haply thus their whim),
And so need naught of this our science, then
Thou well may'st note from what's to follow now
That more for glory do they braggart forth
Than for belief. For mark these very same:
Exiles from country, fugitives afar
From sight of men, with charges foul attain,
Abased with every wretchedness, they yet
Live, and where'er the wretches come, they yet
Make the ancestral sacrifices there,
Butcher the black sheep, and to gods below
Offer the honours, and in bitter case
Turn much more keenly to religion.
Wherefore, it's surer testing of a man
In doubtful perils — mark him as he is
Amid adversities; for then alone
Are the true voices conjured from his breast,
The mask off-stripped, reality behind.
And greed, again, and the blind lust of honours
Which force poor wretches past the bounds of law,
And, oft allies and ministers of crime,
To push through nights and days with hugest toil
To rise untrammelled to the peaks of power —
These wounds of life in no mean part are kept
Festering and open by this fright of death.

For ever we see fierce Want and foul Disgrace
Dislodged afar from secure life and sweet,
Like huddling Shapes before the doors of death.
And whilst, from these, men wish to scape afar,
Driven by false terror, and afar remove,
With civic blood a fortune they amass,
They double their riches, greedy, heapers-up
Of corpse on corpse they have a cruel laugh
For the sad burial of a brother-born,
And hatred and fear of tables of their kin.
Likewise, through this same terror, envy oft
Makes them to peak because before their eyes
That man is lordly, that man gazed upon
Who walks begirt with honour glorious,
Whilst they in filth and darkness roll around;
Some perish away for statues and a name,
And oft to that degree, from fright of death,
Will hate of living and beholding light
Take hold on humankind that they inflict
Their own destruction with a gloomy heart —
Forgetful that this fear is font of cares,
This fear the plague upon their sense of shame,
And this that breaks the ties of comradry
And oversets all reverence and faith,
Mid direst slaughter. For long ere to-day
Often were traitors to country and dear parents
Through quest to shun the realms of Acheron.
For just as children tremble and fear all
In the viewless dark, so even we at times
Dread in the light so many things that be
No whit more fearsome than what children feign,
Shuddering, will be upon them in the dark.
This terror, then, this darkness of the mind,
Not sunrise with its flaring spokes of light,
Nor glittering arrows of morning sun disperse,
But only nature's aspect and her law.

NATURE AND COMPOSITION OF THE MIND

First, then, I say, the mind which oft we call
The intellect, wherein is seated life's
Counsel and regimen, is part no less
Of man than hand and foot and eyes are parts
Of one whole breathing creature. [But some hold]
That sense of mind is in no fixed part seated,

But is of body some one vital state, —
Named “harmony” by Greeks, because thereby
We live with sense, though intellect be not
In any part: as oft the body is said
To have good health (when health, however, ‘s not
One part of him who has it), so they place
The sense of mind in no fixed part of man.
Mightily, diversly, meseems they err.
Often the body palpable and seen
Sickens, while yet in some invisible part
We feel a pleasure; oft the other way,
A miserable in mind feels pleasure still
Throughout his body — quite the same as when
A foot may pain without a pain in head.
Besides, when these our limbs are given o’er
To gentle sleep and lies the burdened frame
At random void of sense, a something else
Is yet within us, which upon that time
Bestirs itself in many a wise, receiving
All motions of joy and phantom cares of heart.
Now, for to see that in man’s members dwells
Also the soul, and body ne’er is wont
To feel sensation by a “harmony”
Take this in chief: the fact that life remains
Oft in our limbs, when much of body’s gone;
Yet that same life, when particles of heat,
Though few, have scattered been, and through the mouth
Air has been given forth abroad, forthwith
Forever deserts the veins, and leaves the bones.
Thus mayst thou know that not all particles
Perform like parts, nor in like manner all
Are props of weal and safety: rather those —
The seeds of wind and exhalations warm —
Take care that in our members life remains.
Therefore a vital heat and wind there is
Within the very body, which at death
Deserts our frames. And so, since nature of mind
And even of soul is found to be, as ‘twere,
A part of man, give over “harmony” —
Name to musicians brought from Helicon, —
Unless themselves they filched it otherwise,
To serve for what was lacking name till then.
Whate’er it be, they’re welcome to it — thou,
Hearken my other maxims.

Mind and soul,
I say, are held conjoined one with other,
And form one single nature of themselves;
But chief and regnant through the frame entire
Is still that counsel which we call the mind,
And that cleaves seated in the midmost breast.
Here leap dismay and terror; round these haunts
Be blandishments of joys; and therefore here
The intellect, the mind. The rest of soul,
Throughout the body scattered, but obeys —
Moved by the nod and motion of the mind.
This, for itself, sole through itself, hath thought;
This for itself hath mirth, even when the thing
That moves it, moves nor soul nor body at all.
And as, when head or eye in us is smit
By assailing pain, we are not tortured then
Through all the body, so the mind alone
Is sometimes smitten, or livens with a joy,
Whilst yet the soul's remainder through the limbs
And through the frame is stirred by nothing new.
But when the mind is moved by shock more fierce,
We mark the whole soul suffering all at once
Along man's members: sweats and pallors spread
Over the body, and the tongue is broken,
And fails the voice away, and ring the ears,
Mists blind the eyeballs, and the joints collapse, —
Aye, men drop dead from terror of the mind.
Hence, whoso will can readily remark
That soul conjoined is with mind, and, when
'Tis strook by influence of the mind, forthwith
In turn it hits and drives the body too.

And this same argument establisheth
That nature of mind and soul corporeal is:
For when 'tis seen to drive the members on,
To snatch from sleep the body, and to change
The countenance, and the whole state of man
To rule and turn, — what yet could never be
Sans contact, and sans body contact fails —
Must we not grant that mind and soul consist
Of a corporeal nature? — And besides
Thou markst that likewise with this body of ours
Suffers the mind and with our body feels.
If the dire speed of spear that cleaves the bones

And bares the inner thews hits not the life,
Yet follows a fainting and a foul collapse,
And, on the ground, dazed tumult in the mind,
And whiles a wavering will to rise afoot.
So nature of mind must be corporeal, since
From stroke and spear corporeal 'tis in throes.

Now, of what body, what components formed
Is this same mind I will go on to tell.
First, I aver, 'tis superfine, composed
Of tiniest particles — that such the fact
Thou canst perceive, if thou attend, from this:
Nothing is seen to happen with such speed
As what the mind proposes and begins;
Therefore the same bestirs itself more swiftly
Than aught whose nature's palpable to eyes.
But what's so agile must of seeds consist
Most round, most tiny, that they may be moved,
When hit by impulse slight. So water moves,
In waves along, at impulse just the least —
Being create of little shapes that roll;
But, contrariwise, the quality of honey
More stable is, its liquids more inert,
More tardy its flow; for all its stock of matter
Cleaves more together, since, indeed, 'tis made
Of atoms not so smooth, so fine, and round.
For the light breeze that hovers yet can blow
High heaps of poppy-seed away for thee
Downward from off the top; but, contrariwise,
A pile of stones or spiny ears of wheat
It can't at all. Thus, in so far as bodies
Are small and smooth, is their mobility;
But, contrariwise, the heavier and more rough,
The more immovable they prove. Now, then,
Since nature of mind is movable so much,
Consist it must of seeds exceeding small
And smooth and round. Which fact once known to thee,
Good friend, will serve thee opportune in else.
This also shows the nature of the same,
How nice its texture, in how small a space
'Twould go, if once compacted as a pellet:
When death's unvexed repose gets hold on man
And mind and soul retire, thou markest there
From the whole body nothing ta'en in form,

Nothing in weight. Death grants ye everything,
But vital sense and exhalation hot.
Thus soul entire must be of smallmost seeds,
Twined through the veins, the vitals, and the thews,
Seeing that, when 'tis from whole body gone,
The outward figuration of the limbs
Is unimpaired and weight fails not a whit.
Just so, when vanished the bouquet of wine,
Or when an unguent's perfume delicate
Into the winds away departs, or when
From any body savour's gone, yet still
The thing itself seems minished naught to eyes,
Thereby, nor aught abstracted from its weight —
No marvel, because seeds many and minute
Produce the savours and the redolence
In the whole body of the things. And so,
Again, again, nature of mind and soul
'Tis thine to know created is of seeds
The tiniest ever, since at flying-forth
It beareth nothing of the weight away.

Yet fancy not its nature simple so.
For an impalpable aura, mixed with heat,
Deserts the dying, and heat draws off the air;
And heat there's none, unless commixed with air:
For, since the nature of all heat is rare,
Athrough it many seeds of air must move.
Thus nature of mind is triple; yet those all
Suffice not for creating sense — since mind
Accepteth not that aught of these can cause
Sense-bearing motions, and much less the thoughts
A man revolves in mind. So unto these
Must added be a somewhat, and a fourth;
That somewhat's altogether void of name;
Than which existeth naught more mobile, naught
More an impalpable, of elements
More small and smooth and round. That first transmits
Sense-bearing motions through the frame, for that
Is roused the first, composed of little shapes;
Thence heat and viewless force of wind take up
The motions, and thence air, and thence all things
Are put in motion; the blood is strook, and then
The vitals all begin to feel, and last
To bones and marrow the sensation comes —

Pleasure or torment. Nor will pain for naught
Enter so far, nor a sharp ill seep through,
But all things be perturbed to that degree
That room for life will fail, and parts of soul
Will scatter through the body's every pore.
Yet as a rule, almost upon the skin
These motion all are stopped, and this is why
We have the power to retain our life.

Now in my eagerness to tell thee how
They are commixed, through what unions fit
They function so, my country's pauper-speech
Constrains me sadly. As I can, however,
I'll touch some points and pass. In such a wise
Course these primordials 'mongst one another
With inter-motions that no one can be
From other sundered, nor its agency
Perform, if once divided by a space;
Like many powers in one body they work.
As in the flesh of any creature still
Is odour and savour and a certain warmth,
And yet from all of these one bulk of body
Is made complete, so, viewless force of wind
And warmth and air, commingled, do create
One nature, by that mobile energy
Assisted which from out itself to them
Imparts initial motion, whereby first
Sense-bearing motion along the vitals springs.
For lurks this essence far and deep and under,
Nor in our body is aught more shut from view,
And 'tis the very soul of all the soul.
And as within our members and whole frame
The energy of mind and power of soul
Is mixed and latent, since create it is
Of bodies small and few, so lurks this fourth,
This essence void of name, composed of small,
And seems the very soul of all the soul,
And holds dominion o'er the body all.
And by like reason wind and air and heat
Must function so, commingled through the frame,
And now the one subside and now another
In interchange of dominance, that thus
From all of them one nature be produced,
Lest heat and wind apart, and air apart,

Make sense to perish, by disseverment.
There is indeed in mind that heat it gets
When seething in rage, and flashes from the eyes
More swiftly fire; there is, again, that wind,
Much, and so cold, companion of all dread,
Which rouses the shudder in the shaken frame;
There is no less that state of air composed,
Making the tranquil breast, the serene face.
But more of hot have they whose restive hearts,
Whose minds of passion quickly seethe in rage —
Of which kind chief are fierce abounding lions,
Who often with roaring burst the breast o'erwrought,
Unable to hold the surging wrath within;
But the cold mind of stags has more of wind,
And speedier through their inwards rouses up
The icy currents which make their members quake.
But more the oxen live by tranquil air,
Nor e'er doth smoky torch of wrath applied,
O'erspreading with shadows of a darkling murk,
Rouse them too far; nor will they stiffen stark,
Pierced through by icy javelins of fear;
But have their place half-way between the two —
Stags and fierce lions. Thus the race of men:
Though training make them equally refined,
It leaves those pristine vestiges behind
Of each mind's nature. Nor may we suppose
Evil can e'er be rooted up so far
That one man's not more given to fits of wrath,
Another's not more quickly touched by fear,
A third not more long-suffering than he should.
And needs must differ in many things besides
The varied natures and resulting habits
Of humankind — of which not now can I
Expound the hidden causes, nor find names
Enough for all the divers shapes of those
Primordials whence this variation springs.
But this meseems I'm able to declare:
Those vestiges of natures left behind
Which reason cannot quite expel from us
Are still so slight that naught prevents a man
From living a life even worthy of the gods.

So then this soul is kept by all the body,
Itself the body's guard, and source of weal:

For they with common roots cleave each to each,
Nor can be torn asunder without death.
Not easy 'tis from lumps of frankincense
To tear their fragrance forth, without its nature
Perishing likewise: so, not easy 'tis
From all the body nature of mind and soul
To draw away, without the whole dissolved.
With seeds so intertwined even from birth,
They're dowered conjointly with a partner-life;
No energy of body or mind, apart,
Each of itself without the other's power,
Can have sensation; but our sense, enkindled
Along the vitals, to flame is blown by both
With mutual motions. Besides the body alone
Is nor begot nor grows, nor after death
Seen to endure. For not as water at times
Gives off the alien heat, nor is thereby
Itself destroyed, but unimpaired remains —
Not thus, I say, can the deserted frame
Bear the dissevering of its joined soul,
But, rent and ruined, moulders all away.
Thus the joint contact of the body and soul
Learns from their earliest age the vital motions,
Even when still buried in the mother's womb;
So no dissevering can hap to them,
Without their bane and ill. And thence mayst see
That, as conjoined is their source of weal,
Conjoined also must their nature be.

If one, moreover, denies that body feel,
And holds that soul, through all the body mixed,
Takes on this motion which we title "sense,"
He battles in vain indubitable facts:
For who'll explain what body's feeling is,
Except by what the public fact itself
Has given and taught us?" But when soul is parted,
Body's without all sense." True! — loses what
Was even in its life-time not its own;
And much beside it loses, when soul's driven
Forth from that life-time. Or, to say that eyes
Themselves can see no thing, but through the same
The mind looks forth, as out of opened doors,
Is — a hard saying; since the feel in eyes
Says the reverse. For this itself draws on

And forces into the pupils of our eyes
Our consciousness. And note the case when often
We lack the power to see refulgent things,
Because our eyes are hampered by their light —
With a mere doorway this would happen not;
For, since it is our very selves that see,
No open portals undertake the toil.
Besides, if eyes of ours but act as doors,
Methinks that, were our sight removed, the mind
Ought then still better to behold a thing —
When even the door-posts have been cleared away.

Herein in these affairs nowise take up
What honoured sage, Democritus, lays down —
That proposition, that primordials
Of body and mind, each super-posed on each,
Vary alternately and interweave
The fabric of our members. For not only
Are the soul-elements smaller far than those
Which this our body and inward parts compose,
But also are they in their number less,
And scattered sparsely through our frame. And thus
This canst thou guarantee: soul's primal germs
Maintain between them intervals as large
At least as are the smallest bodies, which,
When thrown against us, in our body rouse
Sense-bearing motions. Hence it comes that we
Sometimes don't feel alighting on our frames
The clinging dust, or chalk that settles soft;
Nor mists of night, nor spider's gossamer
We feel against us, when, upon our road,
Its net entangles us, nor on our head
The dropping of its withered garmentings;
Nor bird-feathers, nor vegetable down,
Flying about, so light they barely fall;
Nor feel the steps of every crawling thing,
Nor each of all those footprints on our skin
Of midges and the like. To that degree
Must many primal germs be stirred in us
Ere once the seeds of soul that through our frame
Are intermingled 'gin to feel that those
Primordials of the body have been strook,
And ere, in pounding with such gaps between,
They clash, combine and leap apart in turn.

But mind is more the keeper of the gates,
Hath more dominion over life than soul.
For without intellect and mind there's not
One part of soul can rest within our frame
Least part of time; companioning, it goes
With mind into the winds away, and leaves
The icy members in the cold of death.
But he whose mind and intellect abide
Himself abides in life. However much
The trunk be mangled, with the limbs lopped off,
The soul withdrawn and taken from the limbs,
Still lives the trunk and draws the vital air.
Even when deprived of all but all the soul,
Yet will it linger on and cleave to life, —
Just as the power of vision still is strong,
If but the pupil shall abide unharmed,
Even when the eye around it's sorely rent —
Provided only thou destroyest not
Wholly the ball, but, cutting round the pupil,
Leavest that pupil by itself behind —
For more would ruin sight. But if that centre,
That tiny part of eye, be eaten through,
Forthwith the vision fails and darkness comes,
Though in all else the unblemished ball be clear.
'Tis by like compact that the soul and mind
Are each to other bound forevermore.

THE SOUL IS MORTAL

Now come: that thou mayst able be to know
That minds and the light souls of all that live
Have mortal birth and death, I will go on
Verses to build meet for thy rule of life,
Sought after long, discovered with sweet toil.
But under one name I'd have thee yoke them both;
And when, for instance, I shall speak of soul,
Teaching the same to be but mortal, think
Thereby I'm speaking also of the mind —
Since both are one, a substance inter-joined.
First, then, since I have taught how soul exists
A subtle fabric, of particles minute,
Made up from atoms smaller much than those
Of water's liquid damp, or fog, or smoke,
So in mobility it far excels,
More prone to move, though strook by lighter cause

Even moved by images of smoke or fog —
As where we view, when in our sleeps we're lulled,
The altars exhaling steam and smoke aloft —
For, beyond doubt, these apparitions come
To us from outward. Now, then, since thou seest,
Their liquids depart, their waters flow away,
When jars are shivered, and since fog and smoke
Depart into the winds away, believe
The soul no less is shed abroad and dies
More quickly far, more quickly is dissolved
Back to its primal bodies, when withdrawn
From out man's members it has gone away.
For, sure, if body (container of the same
Like as a jar), when shivered from some cause,
And rarefied by loss of blood from veins,
Cannot for longer hold the soul, how then
Thinkst thou it can be held by any air —
A stuff much rarer than our bodies be?

Besides we feel that mind to being comes
Along with body, with body grows and ages.
For just as children totter round about
With frames infirm and tender, so there follows
A weakling wisdom in their minds; and then,
Where years have ripened into robust powers,
Counsel is also greater, more increased
The power of mind; thereafter, where already
The body's shattered by master-powers of eld,
And fallen the frame with its enfeebled powers,
Thought hobbles, tongue wanders, and the mind gives way;
All fails, all's lacking at the selfsame time.
Therefore it suits that even the soul's dissolved,
Like smoke, into the lofty winds of air;
Since we behold the same to being come
Along with body and grow, and, as I've taught,
Crumble and crack, therewith outworn by eld.

Then, too, we see, that, just as body takes
Monstrous diseases and the dreadful pain,
So mind its bitter cares, the grief, the fear;
Wherefore it tallies that the mind no less
Partaker is of death; for pain and disease
Are both artificers of death, — as well
We've learned by the passing of many a man ere now.
Nay, too, in diseases of body, often the mind

Wanders afield; for 'tis beside itself,
And crazed it speaks, or many a time it sinks,
With eyelids closing and a drooping nod,
In heavy drowse, on to eternal sleep;
From whence nor hears it any voices more,
Nor able is to know the faces here
Of those about him standing with wet cheeks
Who vainly call him back to light and life.
Wherefore mind too, confess we must, dissolves,
Seeing, indeed, contagions of disease
Enter into the same. Again, O why,
When the strong wine has entered into man,
And its diffused fire gone round the veins,
Why follows then a heaviness of limbs,
A tangle of the legs as round he reels,
A stuttering tongue, an intellect besoaked,
Eyes all aswim, and hiccups, shouts, and brawls,
And whatso else is of that ilk? — Why this? —
If not that violent and impetuous wine
Is wont to confound the soul within the body?
But whatso can confounded be and balked,
Gives proof, that if a hardier cause got in,
'Twould hap that it would perish then, bereaved
Of any life thereafter. And, moreover,
Often will some one in a sudden fit,
As if by stroke of lightning, tumble down
Before our eyes, and sputter foam, and grunt,
Blither, and twist about with sinews taut,
Gasp up in starts, and weary out his limbs
With tossing round. No marvel, since distract
Through frame by violence of disease.

Confounds, he foams, as if to vomit soul,
As on the salt sea boil the billows round
Under the master might of winds. And now
A groan's forced out, because his limbs are griped,
But, in the main, because the seeds of voice
Are driven forth and carried in a mass
Outwards by mouth, where they are wont to go,
And have a builded highway. He becomes
Mere fool, since energy of mind and soul
Confounded is, and, as I've shown, to-riven,
Asunder thrown, and torn to pieces all
By the same venom. But, again, where cause

Of that disease has faced about, and back
Retreats sharp poison of corrupted frame
Into its shadowy lairs, the man at first
Arises reeling, and gradually comes back
To all his senses and recovers soul.
Thus, since within the body itself of man
The mind and soul are by such great diseases
Shaken, so miserably in labour distraught,
Why, then, believe that in the open air,
Without a body, they can pass their life,
Immortal, battling with the master winds?
And, since we mark the mind itself is cured,
Like the sick body, and restored can be
By medicine, this is forewarning too
That mortal lives the mind. For proper it is
That whosoe'er begins and undertakes
To alter the mind, or meditates to change
Any another nature soever, should add
New parts, or readjust the order given,
Or from the sum remove at least a bit.
But what's immortal willeth for itself
Its parts be nor increased, nor rearranged,
Nor any bit soever flow away:
For change of anything from out its bounds
Means instant death of that which was before.
Ergo, the mind, whether in sickness fallen,
Or by the medicine restored, gives signs,
As I have taught, of its mortality.
So surely will a fact of truth make head
'Gainst errors' theories all, and so shut off
All refuge from the adversary, and rout
Error by two-edged confutation.

And since the mind is of a man one part,
Which in one fixed place remains, like ears,
And eyes, and every sense which pilots life;
And just as hand, or eye, or nose, apart,
Severed from us, can neither feel nor be,
But in the least of time is left to rot,
Thus mind alone can never be, without
The body and the man himself, which seems,
As 'twere the vessel of the same — or aught
Whate'er thou'lt feign as yet more closely joined:
Since body cleaves to mind by surest bonds.

Again, the body's and the mind's live powers
Only in union prosper and enjoy;
For neither can nature of mind, alone of self
Sans body, give the vital motions forth;
Nor, then, can body, wanting soul, endure
And use the senses. Verily, as the eye,
Alone, up-rended from its roots, apart
From all the body, can peer about at naught,
So soul and mind it seems are nothing able,
When by themselves. No marvel, because, commixed
Through veins and inwards, and through bones and thews,
Their elements primordial are confined
By all the body, and own no power free
To bound around through interspaces big,
Thus, shut within these confines, they take on
Motions of sense, which, after death, thrown out
Beyond the body to the winds of air,
Take on they cannot — and on this account,
Because no more in such a way confined.
For air will be a body, be alive,
If in that air the soul can keep itself,
And in that air enclose those motions all
Which in the thews and in the body itself
A while ago 'twas making. So for this,
Again, again, I say confess we must,
That, when the body's wrappings are unwound,
And when the vital breath is forced without,
The soul, the senses of the mind dissolve, —
Since for the twain the cause and ground of life
Is in the fact of their conjoined estate.

Once more, since body's unable to sustain
Division from the soul, without decay
And obscene stench, how canst thou doubt but that
The soul, uprisen from the body's deeps,
Has filtered away, wide-drifted like a smoke,
Or that the changed body crumbling fell
With ruin so entire, because, indeed,
Its deep foundations have been moved from place,
The soul out-filtering even through the frame,
And through the body's every winding way
And orifice? And so by many means
Thou'rt free to learn that nature of the soul
Hath passed in fragments out along the frame,

And that 'twas shivered in the very body
Ere ever it slipped abroad and swam away
Into the winds of air. For never a man
Dying appears to feel the soul go forth
As one sure whole from all his body at once,
Nor first come up the throat and into mouth;
But feels it failing in a certain spot,
Even as he knows the senses too dissolve
Each in its own location in the frame.
But were this mind of ours immortal mind,
Dying 'twould scarce bewail a dissolution,
But rather the going, the leaving of its coat,
Like to a snake. Wherefore, when once the body
Hath passed away, admit we must that soul,
Shivered in all that body, perished too.
Nay, even when moving in the bounds of life,
Often the soul, now tottering from some cause,
Craves to go out, and from the frame entire
Loosened to be; the countenance becomes
Flaccid, as if the supreme hour were there;
And flabbily collapse the members all
Against the bloodless trunk — the kind of case
We see when we remark in common phrase,
“That man’s quite gone,” or “fainted dead away”;
And where there’s now a bustle of alarm,
And all are eager to get some hold upon
The man’s last link of life. For then the mind
And all the power of soul are shook so sore,
And these so totter along with all the frame,
That any cause a little stronger might
Dissolve them altogether. — Why, then, doubt
That soul, when once without the body thrust,
There in the open, an enfeebled thing,
Its wrappings stripped away, cannot endure
Not only through no everlasting age,
But even, indeed, through not the least of time?

Then, too, why never is the intellect,
The counselling mind, begotten in the head,
The feet, the hands, instead of cleaving still
To one sole seat, to one fixed haunt, the breast,
If not that fixed places be assigned
For each thing’s birth, where each, when ’tis create,
Is able to endure, and that our frames

Have such complex adjustments that no shift
In order of our members may appear?
To that degree effect succeeds to cause,
Nor is the flame once wont to be create
In flowing streams, nor cold begot in fire.

Besides, if nature of soul immortal be,
And able to feel, when from our frame disjoined,
The same, I fancy, must be thought to be
Endowed with senses five, — nor is there way
But this whereby to image to ourselves
How under-souls may roam in Acheron.
Thus painters and the elder race of bards
Have pictured souls with senses so endowed.
But neither eyes, nor nose, nor hand, alone
Apart from body can exist for soul,
Nor tongue nor ears apart. And hence indeed
Alone by self they can nor feel nor be.

And since we mark the vital sense to be
In the whole body, all one living thing,
If of a sudden a force with rapid stroke
Should slice it down the middle and cleave in twain,
Beyond a doubt likewise the soul itself,
Divided, dissevered, asunder will be flung
Along with body. But what severed is
And into sundry parts divides, indeed
Admits it owns no everlasting nature.
We hear how chariots of war, areek
With hurly slaughter, lop with flashing scythes
The limbs away so suddenly that there,
Fallen from the trunk, they quiver on the earth,
The while the mind and powers of the man
Can feel no pain, for swiftness of his hurt,
And sheer abandon in the zest of battle:
With the remainder of his frame he seeks
Anew the battle and the slaughter, nor marks
How the swift wheels and scythes of ravin have dragged
Off with the horses his left arm and shield;
Nor other how his right has dropped away,
Mounting again and on. A third attempts
With leg dismembered to arise and stand,
Whilst, on the ground hard by, the dying foot
Twitches its spreading toes. And even the head,
When from the warm and living trunk lopped off,

Keeps on the ground the vital countenance
And open eyes, until 't has rendered up
All remnants of the soul. Nay, once again:
If, when a serpent's darting forth its tongue,
And lashing its tail, thou gettest chance to hew
With axe its length of trunk to many parts,
Thou'lt see each severed fragment writhing round
With its fresh wound, and spattering up the sod,
And there the fore-part seeking with the jaws
After the hinder, with bite to stop the pain.
So shall we say that these be souls entire
In all those fractions? — but from that 'twould follow
One creature'd have in body many souls.
Therefore, the soul, which was indeed but one,
Has been divided with the body too:
Each is but mortal, since alike is each
Hewn into many parts. Again, how often
We view our fellow going by degrees,
And losing limb by limb the vital sense;
First nails and fingers of the feet turn blue,
Next die the feet and legs, then o'er the rest
Slow crawl the certain footsteps of cold death.
And since this nature of the soul is torn,
Nor mounts away, as at one time, entire,
We needs must hold it mortal. But perchance
If thou supposest that the soul itself
Can inward draw along the frame, and bring
Its parts together to one place, and so
From all the members draw the sense away,
Why, then, that place in which such stock of soul
Collected is, should greater seem in sense.
But since such place is nowhere, for a fact,
As said before, 'tis rent and scattered forth,
And so goes under. Or again, if now
I please to grant the false, and say that soul
Can thus be lumped within the frames of those
Who leave the sunshine, dying bit by bit,
Still must the soul as mortal be confessed;
Nor aught it matters whether to wrack it go,
Dispersed in the winds, or, gathered in a mass
From all its parts, sink down to brutish death,
Since more and more in every region sense
Fails the whole man, and less and less of life
In every region lingers.

And besides,
If soul immortal is, and winds its way
Into the body at the birth of man,
Why can we not remember something, then,
Of life-time spent before? why keep we not
Some footprints of the things we did of, old?
But if so changed hath been the power of mind,
That every recollection of things done
Is fallen away, at no o'erlong remove
Is that, I trow, from what we mean by death.
Wherefore 'tis sure that what hath been before
Hath died, and what now is is now create.

Moreover, if after the body hath been built
Our mind's live powers are wont to be put in,
Just at the moment that we come to birth,
And cross the sills of life, 'twould scarcely fit
For them to live as if they seemed to grow
Along with limbs and frame, even in the blood,
But rather as in a cavern all alone.
(Yet all the body duly throngs with sense.)
But public fact declares against all this:
For soul is so entwined through the veins,
The flesh, the thews, the bones, that even the teeth
Share in sensation, as proven by dull ache,
By twinge from icy water, or grating crunch
Upon a stone that got in mouth with bread.
Wherefore, again, again, souls must be thought
Nor void of birth, nor free from law of death;
Nor, if, from outward, in they wound their way,
Could they be thought as able so to cleave
To these our frames, nor, since so interwove,
Appears it that they're able to go forth
Unhurt and whole and loose themselves unscathed
From all the thews, articulations, bones.
But, if perchance thou thinkest that the soul,
From outward winding in its way, is wont
To seep and soak along these members ours,
Then all the more 'twill perish, being thus
With body fused — for what will seep and soak
Will be dissolved and will therefore die.
For just as food, dispersed through all the pores
Of body, and passed through limbs and all the frame,
Perishes, supplying from itself the stuff

For other nature, thus the soul and mind,
Though whole and new into a body going,
Are yet, by seeping in, dissolved away,
Whilst, as through pores, to all the frame there pass
Those particles from which created is
This nature of mind, now ruler of our body,
Born from that soul which perished, when divided
Along the frame. Wherefore it seems that soul
Hath both a natal and funeral hour.

Besides are seeds of soul there left behind
In the breathless body, or not? If there they are,
It cannot justly be immortal deemed,
Since, shorn of some parts lost, 'thas gone away:
But if, borne off with members uncorrupt,
'Thas fled so absolutely all away
It leaves not one remainder of itself
Behind in body, whence do cadavers, then,
From out their putrid flesh exhale the worms,
And whence does such a mass of living things,
Boneless and bloodless, o'er the bloated frame
Bubble and swarm? But if perchance thou thinkest
That souls from outward into worms can wind,
And each into a separate body come,
And reckonest not why many thousand souls
Collect where only one has gone away,
Here is a point, in sooth, that seems to need
Inquiry and a putting to the test:
Whether the souls go on a hunt for seeds
Of worms wherewith to build their dwelling places,
Or enter bodies ready-made, as 'twere.
But why themselves they thus should do and toil
'Tis hard to say, since, being free of body,
They flit around, harassed by no disease,
Nor cold nor famine; for the body labours
By more of kinship to these flaws of life,
And mind by contact with that body suffers
So many ills. But grant it be for them
However useful to construct a body
To which to enter in, 'tis plain they can't.
Then, souls for self no frames nor bodies make,
Nor is there how they once might enter in
To bodies ready-made — for they cannot
Be nicely interwoven with the same,

And there'll be formed no interplay of sense
Common to each.

Again, why is't there goes
Impetuous rage with lion's breed morose,
And cunning with foxes, and to deer why given
The ancestral fear and tendency to flee,
And why in short do all the rest of traits
Engender from the very start of life
In the members and mentality, if not
Because one certain power of mind that came
From its own seed and breed waxes the same
Along with all the body? But were mind
Immortal, were it wont to change its bodies,
How topsy-turvy would earth's creatures act!
The Hyrcan hound would flee the onset oft
Of antlered stag, the scurrying hawk would quake
Along the winds of air at the coming dove,
And men would dote, and savage beasts be wise;
For false the reasoning of those that say
Immortal mind is changed by change of body —
For what is changed dissolves, and therefore dies.
For parts are re-disposed and leave their order;
Wherefore they must be also capable
Of dissolution through the frame at last,
That they along with body perish all.
But should some say that always souls of men
Go into human bodies, I will ask:
How can a wise become a dullard soul?
And why is never a child's a prudent soul?
And the mare's filly why not trained so well
As sturdy strength of steed? We may be sure
They'll take their refuge in the thought that mind
Becomes a weakling in a weakling frame.
Yet be this so, 'tis needful to confess
The soul but mortal, since, so altered now
Throughout the frame, it loses the life and sense
It had before. Or how can mind wax strong
Coequally with body and attain
The craved flower of life, unless it be
The body's colleague in its origins?
Or what's the purport of its going forth
From aged limbs? — fears it, perhaps, to stay,
Pent in a crumbled body? Or lest its house,

Outworn by venerable length of days,
May topple down upon it? But indeed
For an immortal perils are there none.

Again, at parturitions of the wild
And at the rites of Love, that souls should stand
Ready hard by seems ludicrous enough —
Immortals waiting for their mortal limbs
In numbers innumerable, contending madly
Which shall be first and chief to enter in! —
Unless perchance among the souls there be
Such treaties stablished that the first to come
Flying along, shall enter in the first,
And that they make no rivalries of strength!

Again, in ether can't exist a tree,
Nor clouds in ocean deeps, nor in the fields
Can fishes live, nor blood in timber be,
Nor sap in boulders: fixed and arranged
Where everything may grow and have its place.
Thus nature of mind cannot arise alone
Without the body, nor exist afar
From thews and blood. But if 'twere possible,
Much rather might this very power of mind
Be in the head, the shoulders or the heels,
And, born in any part soever, yet
In the same man, in the same vessel abide.
But since within this body even of ours
Stands fixed and appears arranged sure
Where soul and mind can each exist and grow,
Deny we must the more that they can have
Duration and birth, wholly outside the frame.
For, verily, the mortal to conjoin
With the eternal, and to feign they feel
Together, and can function each with each,
Is but to dote: for what can be conceived
Of more unlike, discrepant, ill-assorted,
Than something mortal in a union joined
With an immortal and a secular
To bear the outrageous tempests?

Then, again,
Whatever abides eternal must indeed
Either repel all strokes, because 'tis made
Of solid body, and permit no entrance

Of aught with power to sunder from within
The parts compact — as are those seeds of stuff
Whose nature we've exhibited before;
Or else be able to endure through time
For this: because they are from blows exempt,
As is the void, the which abides untouched,
Unsmitten by any stroke; or else because
There is no room around, whereto things can,
As 'twere, depart in dissolution all, —
Even as the sum of sums eternal is,
Without or place beyond whereto things may
Asunder fly, or bodies which can smite,
And thus dissolve them by the blows of might.

But if perchance the soul's to be adjudged
Immortal, mainly on ground 'tis kept secure
In vital forces — either because there come
Never at all things hostile to its weal,
Or else because what come somehow retire,
Repelled or ere we feel the harm they work,

For, lo, besides that, when the frame's diseased,
Soul sickens too, there cometh, many a time,
That which torments it with the things to be,
Keeps it in dread, and wearies it with cares;
And even when evil acts are of the past,
Still gnaw the old transgressions bitterly.
Add, too, that frenzy, peculiar to the mind,
And that oblivion of the things that were;
Add its submergence in the murky waves
Of drowse and torpor.

FOLLY OF THE FEAR OF DEATH

Therefore death to us
Is nothing, nor concerns us in the least,
Since nature of mind is mortal evermore.
And just as in the ages gone before
We felt no touch of ill, when all sides round
To battle came the Carthaginian host,
And the times, shaken by tumultuous war,
Under the aery coasts of arching heaven
Shuddered and trembled, and all humankind
Doubted to which the empery should fall
By land and sea, thus when we are no more,

When comes that sundering of our body and soul
Through which we're fashioned to a single state,
Verily naught to us, us then no more,
Can come to pass, naught move our senses then —
No, not if earth confounded were with sea,
And sea with heaven. But if indeed do feel
The nature of mind and energy of soul,
After their severance from this body of ours,
Yet nothing 'tis to us who in the bonds
And wedlock of the soul and body live,
Through which we're fashioned to a single state.
And, even if time collected after death
The matter of our frames and set it all
Again in place as now, and if again
To us the light of life were given, O yet
That process too would not concern us aught,
When once the self-succession of our sense
Has been asunder broken. And now and here,
Little enough we're busied with the selves
We were aforetime, nor, concerning them,
Suffer a sore distress. For shouldst thou gaze
Backwards across all yesterdays of time
The immeasurable, thinking how manifold
The motions of matter are, then couldst thou well
Credit this too: often these very seeds
(From which we are to-day) of old were set
In the same order as they are to-day —
Yet this we can't to consciousness recall
Through the remembering mind. For there hath been
An interposed pause of life, and wide
Have all the motions wandered everywhere
From these our senses. For if woe and ail
Perchance are toward, then the man to whom
The bane can happen must himself be there
At that same time. But death precludeth this,
Forbidding life to him on whom might crowd
Such irk and care; and granted 'tis to know:
Nothing for us there is to dread in death,
No wretchedness for him who is no more,
The same estate as if ne'er born before,
When death immortal hath ta'en the mortal life.

Hence, where thou seest a man to grieve because
When dead he rots with body laid away,

Or perishes in flames or jaws of beasts,
Know well: he rings not true, and that beneath
Still works an unseen sting upon his heart,
However he deny that he believes.
His shall be aught of feeling after death.
For he, I fancy, grants not what he says,
Nor what that presupposes, and he fails
To pluck himself with all his roots from life
And cast that self away, quite unawares
Feigning that some remainder's left behind.
For when in life one pictures to oneself
His body dead by beasts and vultures torn,
He pities his state, dividing not himself
Therefrom, removing not the self enough
From the body flung away, imagining
Himself that body, and projecting there
His own sense, as he stands beside it: hence
He grieves that he is mortal born, nor marks
That in true death there is no second self
Alive and able to sorrow for self destroyed,
Or stand lamenting that the self lies there
Mangled or burning. For if it an evil is
Dead to be jerked about by jaw and fang
Of the wild brutes, I see not why 'twere not
Bitter to lie on fires and roast in flames,
Or suffocate in honey, and, reclined
On the smooth oblong of an icy slab,
Grow stiff in cold, or sink with load of earth
Down-crushing from above.

“Thee now no more
The joyful house and best of wives shall welcome,
Nor little sons run up to snatch their kisses
And touch with silent happiness thy heart.
Thou shalt not speed in undertakings more,
Nor be the warder of thine own no more.
Poor wretch,” they say, “one hostile hour hath ta'en
Wretchedly from thee all life's many guerdons,”
But add not, “yet no longer unto thee
Remains a remnant of desire for them”
If this they only well perceived with mind
And followed up with maxims, they would free
Their state of man from anguish and from fear.
“O even as here thou art, aslumber in death,

So shalt thou slumber down the rest of time,
Released from every harrying pang. But we,
We have bewept thee with insatiate woe,
Standing beside whilst on the awful pyre
Thou wert made ashes; and no day shall take
For us the eternal sorrow from the breast.”
But ask the mourner what’s the bitterness
That man should waste in an eternal grief,
If, after all, the thing’s but sleep and rest?
For when the soul and frame together are sunk
In slumber, no one then demands his self
Or being. Well, this sleep may be forever,
Without desire of any selfhood more,
For all it matters unto us asleep.
Yet not at all do those primordial germs
Roam round our members, at that time, afar
From their own motions that produce our senses —
Since, when he’s startled from his sleep, a man
Collects his senses. Death is, then, to us
Much less — if there can be a less than that
Which is itself a nothing: for there comes
Hard upon death a scattering more great
Of the throng of matter, and no man wakes up
On whom once falls the icy pause of life.

This too, O often from the soul men say,
Along their couches holding of the cups,
With faces shaded by fresh wreaths awry:
“Brief is this fruit of joy to paltry man,
Soon, soon departed, and thereafter, no,
It may not be recalled.” — As if, forsooth,
It were their prime of evils in great death
To parch, poor tongues, with thirst and arid drought,
Or chafe for any lack.

Once more, if Nature
Should of a sudden send a voice abroad,
And her own self inveigh against us so:
“Mortal, what hast thou of such grave concern
That thou indulgest in too sickly plaints?
Why this bemoaning and beweeeping death?
For if thy life aforesaid and behind
To thee was grateful, and not all thy good
Was heaped as in sieve to flow away
And perish unavailingly, why not,

Even like a banqueter, depart the halls,
Laden with life? why not with mind content
Take now, thou fool, thy unafflicted rest?
But if whatever thou enjoyed hath been
Lavished and lost, and life is now offence,
Why seekest more to add — which in its turn
Will perish foully and fall out in vain?
O why not rather make an end of life,
Of labour? For all I may devise or find
To pleasure thee is nothing: all things are
The same forever. Though not yet thy body
Wrinkles with years, nor yet the frame exhausts
Outworn, still things abide the same, even if
Thou goest on to conquer all of time
With length of days, yea, if thou never diest” —
What were our answer, but that Nature here
Urges just suit and in her words lays down
True cause of action? Yet should one complain,
Riper in years and elder, and lament,
Poor devil, his death more sorely than is fit,
Then would she not, with greater right, on him
Cry out, inveighing with a voice more shrill:
“Off with thy tears, and choke thy whines, buffoon!
Thou wrinklest — after thou hast had the sum
Of the guerdons of life; yet, since thou cravest ever
What’s not at hand, contemning present good,
That life has slipped away, unperfected
And unavailing unto thee. And now,
Or ere thou guessed it, death beside thy head
Stands — and before thou canst be going home
Sated and laden with the goodly feast.
But now yield all that’s alien to thine age, —
Up, with good grace! make room for sons: thou must.”
Justly, I fancy, would she reason thus,
Justly inveigh and gird: since ever the old
Outcrowded by the new gives way, and ever
The one thing from the others is repaired.
Nor no man is consigned to the abyss
Of Tartarus, the black. For stuff must be,
That thus the after-generations grow, —
Though these, their life completed, follow thee;
And thus like thee are generations all —
Already fallen, or some time to fall.
So one thing from another rises ever;

And in fee-simple life is given to none,
But unto all mere usufruct.

Look back:

Nothing to us was all fore-passed eld
Of time the eternal, ere we had a birth.
And Nature holds this like a mirror up
Of time-to-be when we are dead and gone.
And what is there so horrible appears?
Now what is there so sad about it all?
Is't not serener far than any sleep?

And, verily, those tortures said to be
In Acheron, the deep, they all are ours
Here in this life. No Tantalus, benumbed
With baseless terror, as the fables tell,
Fears the huge boulder hanging in the air:
But, rather, in life an empty dread of Gods
Urges mortality, and each one fears
Such fall of fortune as may chance to him.
Nor eat the vultures into Tityus
Prostrate in Acheron, nor can they find,
Forsooth, throughout eternal ages, aught
To pry around for in that mighty breast.
However hugely he extend his bulk —
Who hath for outspread limbs not acres nine,
But the whole earth — he shall not able be
To bear eternal pain nor furnish food
From his own frame forever. But for us
A Tityus is he whom vultures rend
Prostrate in love, whom anxious anguish eats,
Whom troubles of any unappeased desires
Asunder rip. We have before our eyes
Here in this life also a Sisyphus
In him who seeketh of the populace
The rods, the axes fell, and evermore
Retires a beaten and a gloomy man.
For to seek after power — an empty name,
Nor given at all — and ever in the search
To endure a world of toil, O this it is
To shove with shoulder up the hill a stone
Which yet comes rolling back from off the top,
And headlong makes for levels of the plain.
Then to be always feeding an ingrate mind,
Filling with good things, satisfying never —

As do the seasons of the year for us,
When they return and bring their progenies
And varied charms, and we are never filled
With the fruits of life — O this, I fancy, 'tis
To pour, like those young virgins in the tale,
Waters into a sieve, unfilled forever.

Cerberus and Furies, and that Lack of Light

Tartarus, out-belching from his mouth the surge
Of horrible heat — the which are nowhere, nor
Indeed can be: but in this life is fear
Of retributions just and expiations
For evil acts: the dungeon and the leap
From that dread rock of infamy, the stripes,
The executioners, the oaken rack,
The iron plates, bitumen, and the torch.
And even though these are absent, yet the mind,
With a fore-fearing conscience, plies its goads
And burns beneath the lash, nor sees meanwhile
What terminus of ills, what end of pine
Can ever be, and feareth lest the same
But grow more heavy after death. Of truth,
The life of fools is Acheron on earth.

This also to thy very self sometimes
Repeat thou mayst: “Lo, even good Ancus left
The sunshine with his eyes, in divers things
A better man than thou, O worthless hind;
And many other kings and lords of rule
Thereafter have gone under, once who swayed
O'er mighty peoples. And he also, he —
Who whilom paved a highway down the sea,
And gave his legionaries thoroughfare
Along the deep, and taught them how to cross
The pools of brine afoot, and did contemn,
Trampling upon it with his cavalry,
The bellowings of ocean — poured his soul
From dying body, as his light was ta'en.
And Scipio's son, the thunderbolt of war,
Horror of Carthage, gave his bones to earth,
Like to the lowliest villein in the house.
Add finders-out of sciences and arts;
Add comrades of the Heliconian dames,
Among whom Homer, sceptered o'er them all,

Now lies in slumber sunken with the rest.
Then, too, Democritus, when ripened eld
Admonished him his memory waned away,
Of own accord offered his head to death.
Even Epicurus went, his light of life
Run out, the man in genius who o'er-topped
The human race, extinguishing all others,
As sun, in ether arisen, all the stars.
Wilt thou, then, dally, thou complain to go? —
For whom already life's as good as dead,
Whilst yet thou livest and lookest? — who in sleep
Wastest thy life — time's major part, and snorest
Even when awake, and ceasest not to see
The stuff of dreams, and bearest a mind beset
By baseless terror, nor discoverest oft
What's wrong with thee, when, like a sotted wretch,
Thou'rt jostled along by many crowding cares,
And wanderest reeling round, with mind aswim."

If men, in that same way as on the mind
They feel the load that wearies with its weight,
Could also know the causes whence it comes,
And why so great the heap of ill on heart,
O not in this sort would they live their life,
As now so much we see them, knowing not
What 'tis they want, and seeking ever and ever
A change of place, as if to drop the burden.
The man who sickens of his home goes out,
Forth from his splendid halls, and straight — returns,
Feeling i' faith no better off abroad.
He races, driving his Gallic ponies along,
Down to his villa, madly, — as in haste
To hurry help to a house afire. — At once
He yawns, as soon as foot has touched the threshold,
Or drowsily goes off in sleep and seeks
Forgetfulness, or maybe bustles about
And makes for town again. In such a way
Each human flees himself — a self in sooth,
As happens, he by no means can escape;
And willy-nilly he cleaves to it and loathes,
Sick, sick, and guessing not the cause of ail.
Yet should he see but that, O chiefly then,
Leaving all else, he'd study to divine
The nature of things, since here is in debate

Eternal time and not the single hour,
Mortal's estate in whatsoever remains
After great death.

And too, when all is said,
What evil lust of life is this so great
Subdues us to live, so dreadfully distraught
In perils and alarms? one fixed end
Of life abideth for mortality;
Death's not to shun, and we must go to meet.
Besides we're busied with the same devices,
Ever and ever, and we are at them ever,
And there's no new delight that may be forged
By living on. But whilst the thing we long for
Is lacking, that seems good above all else;
Thereafter, when we've touched it, something else
We long for; ever one equal thirst of life
Grips us agape. And doubtful 'tis what fortune
The future times may carry, or what be
That chance may bring, or what the issue next
Awaiting us. Nor by prolonging life
Take we the least away from death's own time,
Nor can we pluck one moment off, whereby
To minish the aeons of our state of death.
Therefore, O man, by living on, fulfil
As many generations as thou may:
Eternal death shall there be waiting still;
And he who died with light of yesterday
Shall be no briefer time in death's No-more
Than he who perished months or years before.

BOOK IV

PROEM

I wander afield, thriving in sturdy thought,
Through unpathed haunts of the Pierides,
Trodden by step of none before. I joy
To come on undefiled fountains there,
To drain them deep; I joy to pluck new flowers,
To seek for this my head a signal crown
From regions where the Muses never yet
Have garlanded the temples of a man:
First, since I teach concerning mighty things,
And go right on to loose from round the mind
The tightened coils of dread religion;
Next, since, concerning themes so dark, I frame
Song so pellucid, touching all throughout
Even with the Muses' charm — which, as 'twould seem,
Is not without a reasonable ground:
For as physicians, when they seek to give
Young boys the nauseous wormwood, first do touch
The brim around the cup with the sweet juice
And yellow of the honey, in order that
The thoughtless age of boyhood be cajoled
As far as the lips, and meanwhile swallow down
The wormwood's bitter draught, and, though befooled,
Be yet not merely duped, but rather thus
Grow strong again with recreated health:
So now I too (since this my doctrine seems
In general somewhat woeful unto those
Who've had it not in hand, and since the crowd
Starts back from it in horror) have desired
To expound our doctrine unto thee in song
Soft-speaking and Pierian, and, as 'twere,
To touch it with sweet honey of the Muse —
If by such method haply I might hold
The mind of thee upon these lines of ours,
Till thou dost learn the nature of all things
And understandest their utility.

EXISTENCE AND CHARACTER OF THE IMAGES

But since I've taught already of what sort
The seeds of all things are, and how distinct

In divers forms they flit of own accord,
Stirred with a motion everlasting on,
And in what mode things be from them create,
And since I've taught what the mind's nature is,
And of what things 'tis with the body knit
And thrives in strength, and by what mode upturn
That mind returns to its primordials,
Now will I undertake an argument —
One for these matters of supreme concern —
That there exist those somewhats which we call
The images of things: these, like to films
Scaled off the utmost outside of the things,
Flit hither and thither through the atmosphere,
And the same terrify our intellects,
Coming upon us waking or in sleep,
When oft we peer at wonderful strange shapes
And images of people lorn of light,
Which oft have horribly roused us when we lay
In slumber — that haply nevermore may we
Suppose that souls get loose from Acheron,
Or shades go floating in among the living,
Or aught of us is left behind at death,
When body and mind, destroyed together, each
Back to its own primordials goes away.

And thus I say that effigies of things,
And tenuous shapes from off the things are sent,
From off the utmost outside of the things,
Which are like films or may be named a rind,
Because the image bears like look and form
With whatso body has shed it fluttering forth —
A fact thou mayst, however dull thy wits,
Well learn from this: mainly, because we see
Even 'mongst visible objects many be
That send forth bodies, loosely some diffused —
Like smoke from oaken logs and heat from fires —
And some more interwoven and condensed —
As when the locusts in the summertime
Put off their glossy tunics, or when calves
At birth drop membranes from their body's surface,
Or when, again, the slippery serpent doffs
Its vestments 'mongst the thorns — for oft we see
The breres augmented with their flying spoils:
Since such takes place, 'tis likewise certain too

That tenuous images from things are sent,
From off the utmost outside of the things.
For why those kinds should drop and part from things,
Rather than others tenuous and thin,
No power has man to open mouth to tell;
Especially, since on outsides of things
Are bodies many and minute which could,
In the same order which they had before,
And with the figure of their form preserved,
Be thrown abroad, and much more swiftly too,
Being less subject to impediments,
As few in number and placed along the front.
For truly many things we see discharge
Their stuff at large, not only from their cores
Deep-set within, as we have said above,
But from their surfaces at times no less —
Their very colours too. And commonly
The awnings, saffron, red and dusky blue,
Stretched overhead in mighty theatres,
Upon their poles and cross-beams fluttering,
Have such an action quite; for there they dye
And make to undulate with their every hue
The circled throng below, and all the stage,
And rich attire in the patrician seats.
And ever the more the theatre's dark walls
Around them shut, the more all things within
Laugh in the bright suffusion of strange glints,
The daylight being withdrawn. And therefore, since
The canvas hangings thus discharge their dye
From off their surface, things in general must
Likewise their tenuous effigies discharge,
Because in either case they are off-thrown
From off the surface. So there are indeed
Such certain prints and vestiges of forms
Which flit around, of subtlest texture made,
Invisible, when separate, each and one.
Again, all odour, smoke, and heat, and such
Streams out of things diffusedly, because,
Whilst coming from the deeps of body forth
And rising out, along their bending path
They're torn asunder, nor have gateways straight
Wherethrough to mass themselves and struggle abroad.
But contrariwise, when such a tenuous film
Of outside colour is thrown off, there's naught

Can rend it, since 'tis placed along the front
Ready to hand. Lastly those images
Which to our eyes in mirrors do appear,
In water, or in any shining surface,
Must be, since furnished with like look of things,
Fashioned from images of things sent out.
There are, then, tenuous effigies of forms,
Like unto them, which no one can divine
When taken singly, which do yet give back,
When by continued and recurrent discharge
Expelled, a picture from the mirrors' plane.
Nor otherwise, it seems, can they be kept
So well conserved that thus be given back
Figures so like each object.

Now then, learn
How tenuous is the nature of an image.
And in the first place, since primordials be
So far beneath our senses, and much less
E'en than those objects which begin to grow
Too small for eyes to note, learn now in few
How nice are the beginnings of all things —
That this, too, I may yet confirm in proof:
First, living creatures are sometimes so small
That even their third part can nowise be seen;
Judge, then, the size of any inward organ —
What of their sphered heart, their eyes, their limbs,
The skeleton? — How tiny thus they are!
And what besides of those first particles
Whence soul and mind must fashioned be? — Seest not
How nice and how minute? Besides, whatever
Exhales from out its body a sharp smell —
The nauseous absinth, or the panacea,
Strong southernwood, or bitter centaury —
If never so lightly with thy [fingers] twain
Perchance [thou touch] a one of them

Then why not rather know that images
Flit hither and thither, many, in many modes,
Bodiless and invisible?

But lest
Haply thou holdest that those images
Which come from objects are the sole that flit,
Others indeed there be of own accord

Begot, self-formed in earth's aery skies,
Which, moulded to innumerable shapes,
Are borne aloft, and, fluid as they are,
Cease not to change appearance and to turn
Into new outlines of all sorts of forms;
As we behold the clouds grow thick on high
And smirch the serene vision of the world,
Stroking the air with motions. For oft are seen
The giants' faces flying far along
And trailing a spread of shadow; and at times
The mighty mountains and mountain-sundered rocks
Going before and crossing on the sun,
Whereafter a monstrous beast dragging amain
And leading in the other thunderheads.
Now [hear] how easy and how swift they be
Engendered, and perpetually flow off
From things and gliding pass away....

For ever every outside streams away
From off all objects, since discharge they may;
And when this outside reaches other things,
As chiefly glass, it passes through; but where
It reaches the rough rocks or stuff of wood,
There 'tis so rent that it cannot give back
An image. But when gleaming objects dense,
As chiefly mirrors, have been set before it,
Nothing of this sort happens. For it can't
Go, as through glass, nor yet be rent — its safety,
By virtue of that smoothness, being sure.
'Tis therefore that from them the images
Stream back to us; and howso suddenly
Thou place, at any instant, anything
Before a mirror, there an image shows;
Proving that ever from a body's surface
Flow off thin textures and thin shapes of things.
Thus many images in little time
Are gendered; so their origin is named
Rightly a speedy. And even as the sun
Must send below, in little time, to earth
So many beams to keep all things so full
Of light incessant; thus, on grounds the same,
From things there must be borne, in many modes,
To every quarter round, upon the moment,
The many images of things; because

Unto whatever face of things we turn
The mirror, things of form and hue the same
Respond. Besides, though but a moment since
Serenest was the weather of the sky,
So fiercely sudden is it foully thick
That ye might think that round about all murk
Had parted forth from Acheron and filled
The mighty vaults of sky — so grievously,
As gathers thus the storm-clouds' gruesome night,
Do faces of black horror hang on high —
Of which how small a part an image is
There's none to tell or reckon out in words.

Now come; with what swift motion they are borne,
These images, and what the speed assigned
To them across the breezes swimming on —
So that o'er lengths of space a little hour
Alone is wasted, toward whatever region
Each with its divers impulse tends — I'll tell
In verses sweeter than they many are;
Even as the swan's slight note is better far
Than that dispersed clamour of the cranes
Among the southwind's aery clouds. And first,
One oft may see that objects which are light
And made of tiny bodies are the swift;
In which class is the sun's light and his heat,
Since made from small primordial elements
Which, as it were, are forward knocked along
And through the interspaces of the air
To pass delay not, urged by blows behind;
For light by light is instantly supplied
And gleam by following gleam is spurred and driven.
Thus likewise must the images have power
Through unimaginable space to speed
Within a point of time, — first, since a cause
Exceeding small there is, which at their back
Far forward drives them and propels, where, too,
They're carried with such winged lightness on;
And, secondly, since furnished, when sent off,
With texture of such rareness that they can
Through objects whatsoever penetrate
And ooze, as 'twere, through intervening air.
Besides, if those fine particles of things
Which from so deep within are sent abroad,

As light and heat of sun, are seen to glide
And spread themselves through all the space of heaven
Upon one instant of the day, and fly
O'er sea and lands and flood the heaven, what then
Of those which on the outside stand prepared,
When they're hurled off with not a thing to check
Their going out? Dost thou not see indeed
How swifter and how farther must they go
And speed through manifold the length of space
In time the same that from the sun the rays
O'erspread the heaven? This also seems to be
Example chief and true with what swift speed
The images of things are borne about:
That soon as ever under open skies
Is spread the shining water, all at once,
If stars be out in heaven, upgleam from earth,
Serenely and radiant in the water there,
The constellations of the universe —
Now seest thou not in what a point of time
An image from the shores of ether falls
Unto the shores of earth? Wherefore, again,
And yet again, 'tis needful to confess
With wondrous...

THE SENSES AND MENTAL PICTURES

Bodies that strike the eyes, awaking sight.
From certain things flow odours evermore,
As cold from rivers, heat from sun, and spray
From waves of ocean, eater-out of walls
Around the coasts. Nor ever cease to flit
The varied voices, sounds athrough the air.
Then too there comes into the mouth at times
The wet of a salt taste, when by the sea
We roam about; and so, whene'er we watch
The wormword being mixed, its bitter stings.
To such degree from all things is each thing
Borne streamingly along, and sent about
To every region round; and nature grants
Nor rest nor respite of the onward flow,
Since 'tis incessantly we feeling have,
And all the time are suffered to descry
And smell all things at hand, and hear them sound.
Besides, since shape examined by our hands
Within the dark is known to be the same

As that by eyes perceived within the light
And lustrous day, both touch and sight must be
By one like cause aroused. So, if we test
A square and get its stimulus on us
Within the dark, within the light what square
Can fall upon our sight, except a square
That images the things? Wherefore it seems
The source of seeing is in images,
Nor without these can anything be viewed.

Now these same films I name are borne about
And tossed and scattered into regions all.
But since we do perceive alone through eyes,
It follows hence that whitherso we turn
Our sight, all things do strike against it there
With form and hue. And just how far from us
Each thing may be away, the image yields
To us the power to see and chance to tell:
For when 'tis sent, at once it shoves ahead
And drives along the air that's in the space
Betwixt it and our eyes. And thus this air
All glides athrough our eyeballs, and, as 'twere,
Brushes athrough our pupils and thuswise
Passes across. Therefore it comes we see
How far from us each thing may be away,
And the more air there be that's driven before,
And too the longer be the brushing breeze
Against our eyes, the farther off removed
Each thing is seen to be: forsooth, this work
With mightily swift order all goes on,
So that upon one instant we may see
What kind the object and how far away.

Nor over-marvellous must this be deemed
In these affairs that, though the films which strike
Upon the eyes cannot be singly seen,
The things themselves may be perceived. For thus
When the wind beats upon us stroke by stroke
And when the sharp cold streams, 'tis not our wont
To feel each private particle of wind
Or of that cold, but rather all at once;
And so we see how blows affect our body,
As if one thing were beating on the same
And giving us the feel of its own body
Outside of us. Again, whene'er we thump

With finger-tip upon a stone, we touch
But the rock's surface and the outer hue,
Nor feel that hue by contact — rather feel
The very hardness deep within the rock.

Now come, and why beyond a looking-glass
An image may be seen, perceive. For seen
It soothly is, removed far within.

'Tis the same sort as objects peered upon
Outside in their true shape, whene'er a door
Yields through itself an open peering-place,
And lets us see so many things outside
Beyond the house. Also that sight is made
By a twofold twin air: for first is seen
The air inside the door-posts; next the doors,
The twain to left and right; and afterwards
A light beyond comes brushing through our eyes,
Then other air, then objects peered upon
Outside in their true shape. And thus, when first
The image of the glass projects itself,
As to our gaze it comes, it shoves ahead
And drives along the air that's in the space
Betwixt it and our eyes, and brings to pass
That we perceive the air ere yet the glass.
But when we've also seen the glass itself,
Forthwith that image which from us is borne
Reaches the glass, and there thrown back again
Comes back unto our eyes, and driving rolls
Ahead of itself another air, that then
'Tis this we see before itself, and thus
It looks so far removed behind the glass.
Wherefore again, again, there's naught for wonder

In those which render from the mirror's plane
A vision back, since each thing comes to pass
By means of the two airs. Now, in the glass
The right part of our members is observed
Upon the left, because, when comes the image
Hitting against the level of the glass,
'Tis not returned unshifted; but forced off
Backwards in line direct and not oblique, —
Exactly as whoso his plaster-mask
Should dash, before 'twere dry, on post or beam,
And it should straightway keep, at clinging there,
Its shape, reversed, facing him who threw,

And so remould the features it gives back:
It comes that now the right eye is the left,
The left the right. An image too may be
From mirror into mirror handed on,
Until of idol-films even five or six
Have thus been gendered. For whatever things
Shall hide back yonder in the house, the same,
However far removed in twisting ways,
May still be all brought forth through bending paths
And by these several mirrors seen to be
Within the house, since nature so compels
All things to be borne backward and spring off
At equal angles from all other things.
To such degree the image gleams across
From mirror unto mirror; where 'twas left
It comes to be the right, and then again
Returns and changes round unto the left.
Again, those little sides of mirrors curved
Proportionate to the bulge of our own flank
Send back to us their idols with the right
Upon the right; and this is so because
Either the image is passed on along
From mirror unto mirror, and thereafter,
When twice dashed off, flies back unto ourselves;
Or else the image wheels itself around,
When once unto the mirror it has come,
Since the curved surface teaches it to turn
To usward. Further, thou might'st well believe
That these film-idols step along with us
And set their feet in unison with ours
And imitate our carriage, since from that
Part of a mirror whence thou hast withdrawn
Straightway no images can be returned.

Further, our eye-balls tend to flee the bright
And shun to gaze thereon; the sun even blinds,
If thou goest on to strain them unto him,
Because his strength is mighty, and the films
Heavily downward from on high are borne
Through the pure ether and the viewless winds,
And strike the eyes, disordering their joints.
So piecing lustre often burns the eyes,
Because it holdeth many seeds of fire
Which, working into eyes, engender pain.

Again, whatever jaundiced people view
Becomes wan-yellow, since from out their bodies
Flow many seeds wan-yellow forth to meet
The films of things, and many too are mixed
Within their eye, which by contagion paint
All things with sallowness. Again, we view
From dark recesses things that stand in light,
Because, when first has entered and possessed
The open eyes this nearer darkling air,
Swiftly the shining air and luminous
Followeth in, which purges then the eyes
And scatters asunder of that other air
The sable shadows, for in large degrees
This air is nimbler, nicer, and more strong.
And soon as ever 'thas filled and oped with light
The pathways of the eyeballs, which before
Black air had blocked, there follow straightaway
Those films of things out-standing in the light,
Provoking vision — what we cannot do
From out the light with objects in the dark,
Because that denser darkling air behind
Followeth in, and fills each aperture
And thus blockades the pathways of the eyes
That there no images of any things
Can be thrown in and agitate the eyes.

And when from far away we do behold
The squared towers of a city, oft
Rounded they seem, — on this account because
Each distant angle is perceived obtuse,
Or rather it is not perceived at all;
And perishes its blow nor to our gaze
Arrives its stroke, since through such length of air
Are borne along the idols that the air
Makes blunt the idol of the angle's point
By numerous collidings. When thuswise
The angles of the tower each and all
Have quite escaped the sense, the stones appear
As rubbed and rounded on a turner's wheel —
Yet not like objects near and truly round,
But with a semblance to them, shadowily.
Likewise, our shadow in the sun appears
To move along and follow our own steps
And imitate our carriage — if thou thinkest

Air that is thus bereft of light can walk,
Following the gait and motion of mankind.
For what we use to name a shadow, sure
Is naught but air deprived of light. No marvel:
Because the earth from spot to spot is reft
Progressively of light of sun, whenever
In moving round we get within its way,
While any spot of earth by us abandoned
Is filled with light again, on this account
It comes to pass that what was body's shadow
Seems still the same to follow after us
In one straight course. Since, evermore pour in
New lights of rays, and perish then the old,
Just like the wool that's drawn into the flame.
Therefore the earth is easily spoiled of light
And easily refilled and from herself
Washeth the black shadows quite away.

And yet in this we don't at all concede
That eyes be cheated. For their task it is
To note in whatsoever place be light,
In what be shadow: whether or no the gleams
Be still the same, and whether the shadow which
Just now was here is that one passing thither,
Or whether the facts be what we said above,
'Tis after all the reasoning of mind
That must decide; nor can our eyeballs know
The nature of reality. And so
Attach thou not this fault of mind to eyes,
Nor lightly think our senses everywhere
Are tottering. The ship in which we sail
Is borne along, although it seems to stand;
The ship that bides in roadstead is supposed
There to be passing by. And hills and fields
Seem fleeing fast astern, past which we urge
The ship and fly under the bellying sails.
The stars, each one, do seem to pause, affixed
To the ethereal caverns, though they all
Forever are in motion, rising out
And thence revisiting their far descents
When they have measured with their bodies bright
The span of heaven. And likewise sun and moon
Seem biding in a roadstead, — objects which,
As plain fact proves, are really borne along.

Between two mountains far away aloft
From midst the whirl of waters open lies
A gaping exit for the fleet, and yet
They seem conjoined in a single isle.
When boys themselves have stopped their spinning round,
The halls still seem to whirl and posts to reel,
Until they now must almost think the roofs
Threaten to ruin down upon their heads.
And now, when nature begins to lift on high
The sun's red splendour and the tremulous fires,
And raise him o'er the mountain-tops, those mountains —
O'er which he seemeth then to thee to be,
His glowing self hard by atingeing them
With his own fire — are yet away from us
Scarcely two thousand arrow-shots, indeed
Oft scarce five hundred courses of a dart;
Although between those mountains and the sun
Lie the huge plains of ocean spread beneath
The vasty shores of ether, and intervene
A thousand lands, possessed by many a folk
And generations of wild beasts. Again,
A pool of water of but a finger's depth,
Which lies between the stones along the pave,
Offers a vision downward into earth
As far, as from the earth o'erspread on high
The gulfs of heaven; that thus thou seemest to view
Clouds down below and heavenly bodies plunged
Wondrously in heaven under earth.
Then too, when in the middle of the stream
Sticks fast our dashing horse, and down we gaze
Into the river's rapid waves, some force
Seems then to bear the body of the horse,
Though standing still, reversely from his course,
And swiftly push up-stream. And wheresoe'er
We cast our eyes across, all objects seem
Thus to be onward borne and flow along
In the same way as we. A portico,
Albeit it stands well propped from end to end
On equal columns, parallel and big,
Contracts by stages in a narrow cone,
When from one end the long, long whole is seen, —
Until, conjoining ceiling with the floor,
And the whole right side with the left, it draws
Together to a cone's nigh-viewless point.

To sailors on the main the sun he seems
From out the waves to rise, and in the waves
To set and bury his light — because indeed
They gaze on naught but water and the sky.
Again, to gazers ignorant of the sea,
Vessels in port seem, as with broken poops,
To lean upon the water, quite agog;
For any portion of the oars that's raised
Above the briny spray is straight, and straight
The rudders from above. But other parts,
Those sunk, immersed below the water-line,
Seem broken all and bended and inclined
Sloping to upwards, and turned back to float
Almost atop the water. And when the winds
Carry the scattered drifts along the sky
In the night-time, then seem to glide along
The radiant constellations 'gainst the clouds
And there on high to take far other course
From that whereon in truth they're borne. And then,
If haply our hand be set beneath one eye
And press below thereon, then to our gaze
Each object which we gaze on seems to be,
By some sensation twain — then twain the lights
Of lampions burgeoning in flowers of flame,
And twain the furniture in all the house,
Two-fold the visages of fellow-men,
And twain their bodies. And again, when sleep
Has bound our members down in slumber soft
And all the body lies in deep repose,
Yet then we seem to self to be awake
And move our members; and in night's blind gloom
We think to mark the daylight and the sun;
And, shut within a room, yet still we seem
To change our skies, our oceans, rivers, hills,
To cross the plains afoot, and hear new sounds,
Though still the austere silence of the night
Abides around us, and to speak replies,
Though voiceless. Other cases of the sort
Wondrously many do we see, which all
Seek, so to say, to injure faith in sense —
In vain, because the largest part of these
Deceives through mere opinions of the mind,
Which we do add ourselves, feigning to see
What by the senses are not seen at all.

For naught is harder than to separate
Plain facts from dubious, which the mind forthwith
Adds by itself.

Again, if one suppose
That naught is known, he knows not whether this
Itself is able to be known, since he
Confesses naught to know. Therefore with him
I waive discussion — who has set his head
Even where his feet should be. But let me grant
That this he knows, — I question: whence he knows
What 'tis to know and not-to-know in turn,
And what created concept of the truth,
And what device has proved the dubious
To differ from the certain? — since in things
He's heretofore seen naught of true. Thou'lt find
That from the senses first hath been create
Concept of truth, nor can the senses be
Rebutted. For criterion must be found
Worthy of greater trust, which shall defeat
Through own authority the false by true;
What, then, than these our senses must there be
Worthy a greater trust? Shall reason, sprung
From some false sense, prevail to contradict
Those senses, sprung as reason wholly is
From out the senses? — For lest these be true,
All reason also then is falsified.
Or shall the ears have power to blame the eyes,
Or yet the touch the ears? Again, shall taste
Accuse this touch or shall the nose confute
Or eyes defeat it? Methinks not so it is:
For unto each has been divided off
Its function quite apart, its power to each;
And thus we're still constrained to perceive
The soft, the cold, the hot apart, apart
All divers hues and whatso things there be
Conjoined with hues. Likewise the tasting tongue
Has its own power apart, and smells apart
And sounds apart are known. And thus it is
That no one sense can e'er convict another.
Nor shall one sense have power to blame itself,
Because it always must be deemed the same,
Worthy of equal trust. And therefore what
At any time unto these senses showed,

The same is true. And if the reason be
Unable to unravel us the cause
Why objects, which at hand were square, afar
Seemed rounded, yet it more availeth us,
Lacking the reason, to pretend a cause
For each configuration, than to let
From out our hands escape the obvious things
And injure primal faith in sense, and wreck
All those foundations upon which do rest
Our life and safety. For not only reason
Would topple down; but even our very life
Would straightaway collapse, unless we dared
To trust our senses and to keep away
From headlong heights and places to be shunned
Of a like peril, and to seek with speed
Their opposites! Again, as in a building,
If the first plumb-line be askew, and if
The square deceiving swerve from lines exact,
And if the level waver but the least
In any part, the whole construction then
Must turn out faulty — shelving and askew,
Leaning to back and front, incongruous,
That now some portions seem about to fall,
And falls the whole ere long — betrayed indeed
By first deceiving estimates: so too
Thy calculations in affairs of life
Must be askew and false, if sprung for thee
From senses false. So all that troop of words
Marshalled against the senses is quite vain.

And now remains to demonstrate with ease
How other senses each their things perceive.

Firstly, a sound and every voice is heard,
When, getting into ears, they strike the sense
With their own body. For confess we must
Even voice and sound to be corporeal,
Because they're able on the sense to strike.
Besides voice often scrapes against the throat,
And screams in going out do make more rough
The wind-pipe — naturally enough, methinks,
When, through the narrow exit rising up
In larger throng, these primal germs of voice
Have thus begun to issue forth. In sooth,
Also the door of the mouth is scraped against

[By air blown outward] from distended [cheeks].

And thus no doubt there is, that voice and words
Consist of elements corporeal,
With power to pain. Nor art thou unaware
Likewise how much of body's ta'en away,
How much from very thews and powers of men
May be withdrawn by steady talk, prolonged
Even from the rising splendour of the morn
To shadows of black evening, — above all
If 't be outpoured with most exceeding shouts.
Therefore the voice must be corporeal,
Since the long talker loses from his frame
A part.

Moreover, roughness in the sound
Comes from the roughness in the primal germs,
As a smooth sound from smooth ones is create;
Nor have these elements a form the same
When the trump rumbles with a hollow roar,
As when barbaric Berecynthian pipe
Buzzes with raucous boomings, or when swans
By night from icy shores of Helicon
With wailing voices raise their liquid dirge.

Thus, when from deep within our frame we force
These voices, and at mouth expel them forth,
The mobile tongue, artificer of words,
Makes them articulate, and too the lips
By their formations share in shaping them.
Hence when the space is short from starting-point
To where that voice arrives, the very words
Must too be plainly heard, distinctly marked.
For then the voice conserves its own formation,
Conserves its shape. But if the space between
Be longer than is fit, the words must be
Through the much air confounded, and the voice
Disordered in its flight across the winds —
And so it haps, that thou canst sound perceive,
Yet not determine what the words may mean;
To such degree confounded and encumbered
The voice approaches us. Again, one word,
Sent from the crier's mouth, may rouse all ears
Among the populace. And thus one voice
Scatters asunder into many voices,

Since it divides itself for separate ears,
Imprinting form of word and a clear tone.
But whatso part of voices fails to hit
The ears themselves perishes, borne beyond,
Idly diffused among the winds. A part,
Beating on solid porticoes, tossed back
Returns a sound; and sometimes mocks the ear
With a mere phantom of a word. When this
Thou well hast noted, thou canst render count
Unto thyself and others why it is
Along the lonely places that the rocks
Give back like shapes of words in order like,
When search we after comrades wandering
Among the shady mountains, and aloud
Call unto them, the scattered. I have seen
Spots that gave back even voices six or seven
For one thrown forth — for so the very hills,
Dashing them back against the hills, kept on
With their reverberations. And these spots
The neighbouring country-side doth feign to be
Haunts of the goat-foot satyrs and the nymphs;
And tells ye there be fauns, by whose night noise
And antic revels yonder they declare
The voiceless silences are broken oft,
And tones of strings are made and wailings sweet
Which the pipe, beat by players' finger-tips,
Pours out; and far and wide the farmer-race
Begins to hear, when, shaking the garmentings
Of pine upon his half-beast head, god-Pan
With puckered lip oft runneth o'er and o'er
The open reeds, — lest flute should cease to pour
The woodland music! Other prodigies
And wonders of this ilk they love to tell,
Lest they be thought to dwell in lonely spots
And even by gods deserted. This is why
They boast of marvels in their story-tellings;
Or by some other reason are led on —
Greedy, as all mankind hath ever been,
To prattle fables into ears.

Again,

One need not wonder how it comes about
That through those places (through which eyes cannot
View objects manifest) sounds yet may pass

And assail the ears. For often we observe
People conversing, though the doors be closed;
No marvel either, since all voice unharmed
Can wind through bended apertures of things,
While idol-films decline to — for they're rent,
Unless along straight apertures they swim,
Like those in glass, through which all images
Do fly across. And yet this voice itself,
In passing through shut chambers of a house,
Is dulled, and in a jumble enters ears,
And sound we seem to hear far more than words.
Moreover, a voice is into all directions
Divided up, since off from one another
New voices are engendered, when one voice
Hath once leapt forth, outstarting into many —
As oft a spark of fire is wont to sprinkle
Itself into its several fires. And so,
Voices do fill those places hid behind,
Which all are in a hubbub round about,
Astir with sound. But idol-films do tend,
As once sent forth, in straight directions all;
Wherefore one can inside a wall see naught,
Yet catch the voices from beyond the same.

Nor tongue and palate, whereby we flavour feel,
Present more problems for more work of thought.
Firstly, we feel a flavour in the mouth,
When forth we squeeze it, in chewing up our food, —
As any one perchance begins to squeeze
With hand and dry a sponge with water soaked.
Next, all which forth we squeeze is spread about
Along the pores and intertwined paths
Of the loose-textured tongue. And so, when smooth
The bodies of the oozy flavour, then
Delightfully they touch, delightfully
They treat all spots, around the wet and trickling
Enclosures of the tongue. And contrariwise,
They sting and pain the sense with their assault,
According as with roughness they're supplied.
Next, only up to palate is the pleasure
Coming from flavour; for in truth when down
'Thas plunged along the throat, no pleasure is,
Whilst into all the frame it spreads around;
Nor aught it matters with what food is fed

The body, if only what thou take thou canst
Distribute well digested to the frame
And keep the stomach in a moist career.

Now, how it is we see some food for some,
Others for others....

I will unfold, or wherefore what to some
Is foul and bitter, yet the same to others
Can seem delectable to eat, — why here
So great the distance and the difference is
That what is food to one to some becomes
Fierce poison, as a certain snake there is
Which, touched by spittle of a man, will waste
And end itself by gnawing up its coil.
Again, fierce poison is the hellebore
To us, but puts the fat on goats and quails.
That thou mayst know by what devices this
Is brought about, in chief thou must recall
What we have said before, that seeds are kept
Commixed in things in divers modes. Again,
As all the breathing creatures which take food
Are outwardly unlike, and outer cut
And contour of their members bounds them round,
Each differing kind by kind, they thus consist
Of seeds of varying shape. And furthermore,
Since seeds do differ, divers too must be
The interstices and paths (which we do call
The apertures) in all the members, even
In mouth and palate too. Thus some must be
More small or yet more large, three-cornered some
And others squared, and many others round,
And certain of them many-angled too
In many modes. For, as the combination
And motion of their divers shapes demand,
The shapes of apertures must be diverse
And paths must vary according to their walls
That bound them. Hence when what is sweet to some,
Becomes to others bitter, for him to whom
'Tis sweet, the smoothest particles must needs
Have entered caressingly the palate's pores.
And, contrariwise, with those to whom that sweet
Is sour within the mouth, beyond a doubt
The rough and barbed particles have got
Into the narrows of the apertures.

Now easy it is from these affairs to know
Whatever...

Indeed, where one from o'er-abundant bile
Is stricken with fever, or in other wise
Feels the roused violence of some malady,
There the whole frame is now upset, and there
All the positions of the seeds are changed, —
So that the bodies which before were fit
To cause the savour, now are fit no more,
And now more apt are others which be able
To get within the pores and gender sour.
Both sorts, in sooth, are intermixed in honey —
What oft we've proved above to thee before.
Now come, and I will indicate what wise
Impact of odour on the nostrils touches.
And first, 'tis needful there be many things
From whence the streaming flow of varied odours
May roll along, and we're constrained to think
They stream and dart and sprinkle themselves about
Impartially. But for some breathing creatures
One odour is more apt, to others another —
Because of differing forms of seeds and pores.
Thus on and on along the zephyrs bees
Are led by odour of honey, vultures too
By carcasses. Again, the forward power
Of scent in dogs doth lead the hunter on
Whithersoever the splay-foot of wild beast
Hath hastened its career; and the white goose,
The saviour of the Roman citadel,
Forescents afar the odour of mankind.
Thus, diversly to divers ones is given
Peculiar smell that leadeth each along
To his own food or makes him start aback
From loathsome poison, and in this wise are
The generations of the wild preserved.

Yet is this pungence not alone in odours
Or in the class of flavours; but, likewise,
The look of things and hues agree not all
So well with senses unto all, but that
Some unto some will be, to gaze upon,
More keen and painful. Lo, the raving lions,
They dare not face and gaze upon the cock
Who's wont with wings to flap away the night

From off the stage, and call the beaming morn
With clarion voice — and lions straightway thus
Bethink themselves of flight, because, ye see,
Within the body of the cocks there be
Some certain seeds, which, into lions' eyes
Injected, bore into the pupils deep
And yield such piercing pain they can't hold out
Against the cocks, however fierce they be —
Whilst yet these seeds can't hurt our gaze the least,
Either because they do not penetrate,
Or since they have free exit from the eyes
As soon as penetrating, so that thus
They cannot hurt our eyes in any part
By there remaining.

 To speak once more of odour;
Whatever assail the nostrils, some can travel
A longer way than others. None of them,
However, 's borne so far as sound or voice —
While I omit all mention of such things
As hit the eyesight and assail the vision.
For slowly on a wandering course it comes
And perishes sooner, by degrees absorbed
Easily into all the winds of air; —
And first, because from deep inside the thing
It is discharged with labour (for the fact
That every object, when 'tis shivered, ground,
Or crumbled by the fire, will smell the stronger
Is sign that odours flow and part away
From inner regions of the things). And next,
Thou mayest see that odour is create
Of larger primal germs than voice, because
It enters not through stony walls, wherethrough
Unfailingly the voice and sound are borne;
Wherefore, besides, thou wilt observe 'tis not
So easy to trace out in whatso place
The smelling object is. For, dallying on
Along the winds, the particles cool off,
And then the scurrying messengers of things
Arrive our senses, when no longer hot.
So dogs oft wander astray, and hunt the scent.

Now mark, and hear what objects move the mind,
And learn, in few, whence unto intellect
Do come what come. And first I tell thee this:

That many images of objects rove
In many modes to every region round —
So thin that easily the one with other,
When once they meet, uniteth in mid-air,
Like gossamer or gold-leaf. For, indeed,
Far thinner are they in their fabric than
Those images which take a hold on eyes
And smite the vision, since through body's pores
They penetrate, and inwardly stir up
The subtle nature of mind and smite the sense.
Thus, Centaurs and the limbs of Scyllas, thus
The Cerberus-visages of dogs we see,
And images of people gone before —
Dead men whose bones earth bosomed long ago;
Because the images of every kind
Are everywhere about us borne — in part
Those which are gendered in the very air
Of own accord, in part those others which
From divers things do part away, and those
Which are compounded, made from out their shapes.
For soothly from no living Centaur is
That phantom gendered, since no breed of beast
Like him was ever; but, when images
Of horse and man by chance have come together,
They easily cohere, as aforesaid,
At once, through subtle nature and fabric thin.
In the same fashion others of this ilk
Created are. And when they're quickly borne
In their exceeding lightness, easily
(As earlier I showed) one subtle image,
Compounded, moves by its one blow the mind,
Itself so subtle and so strangely quick.

That these things come to pass as I record,
From this thou easily canst understand:
So far as one is unto other like,
Seeing with mind as well as with the eyes
Must come to pass in fashion not unlike.
Well, now, since I have shown that I perceive
Haply a lion through those idol-films
Such as assail my eyes, 'tis thine to know
Also the mind is in like manner moved,
And sees, nor more nor less than eyes do see
(Except that it perceives more subtle films)

The lion and aught else through idol-films.
And when the sleep has overset our frame,
The mind's intelligence is now awake,
Still for no other reason, save that these —
The self-same films as when we are awake —
Assail our minds, to such degree indeed
That we do seem to see for sure the man
Whom, void of life, now death and earth have gained
Dominion over. And nature forces this
To come to pass because the body's senses
Are resting, thwarted through the members all,
Unable now to conquer false with true;
And memory lies prone and languishes
In slumber, nor protests that he, the man
Whom the mind feigns to see alive, long since
Hath been the gain of death and dissolution.

And further, 'tis no marvel idols move
And toss their arms and other members round
In rhythmic time — and often in men's sleeps
It haps an image this is seen to do;
In sooth, when perishes the former image,
And other is gendered of another pose,
That former seemeth to have changed its gestures.
Of course the change must be conceived as speedy;
So great the swiftness and so great the store
Of idol-things, and (in an instant brief
As mind can mark) so great, again, the store
Of separate idol-parts to bring supplies.

It happens also that there is supplied
Sometimes an image not of kind the same;
But what before was woman, now at hand
Is seen to stand there, altered into male;
Or other visage, other age succeeds;
But slumber and oblivion take care
That we shall feel no wonder at the thing.

And much in these affairs demands inquiry,
And much, illumination — if we crave
With plainness to exhibit facts. And first,
Why doth the mind of one to whom the whim
To think has come behold forthwith that thing?
Or do the idols watch upon our will,
And doth an image unto us occur,

Directly we desire — if heart prefer
The sea, the land, or after all the sky?
Assemblies of the citizens, parades,
Banquets, and battles, these and all doth she,
Nature, create and furnish at our word? —
Maugre the fact that in same place and spot
Another's mind is meditating things
All far unlike. And what, again, of this:
When we in sleep behold the idols step,
In measure, forward, moving supple limbs,
Whilst forth they put each supple arm in turn
With speedy motion, and with eyeing heads
Repeat the movement, as the foot keeps time?
Forsooth, the idols they are steeped in art,
And wander to and fro well taught indeed, —
Thus to be able in the time of night
To make such games! Or will the truth be this:
Because in one least moment that we mark —
That is, the uttering of a single sound —
There lurk yet many moments, which the reason
Discovers to exist, therefore it comes
That, in a moment how so brief ye will,
The divers idols are hard by, and ready
Each in its place diverse? So great the swiftness,
So great, again, the store of idol-things,
And so, when perishes the former image,
And other is gendered of another pose,
The former seemeth to have changed its gestures.
And since they be so tenuous, mind can mark
Sharply alone the ones it strains to see;
And thus the rest do perish one and all,
Save those for which the mind prepares itself.
Further, it doth prepare itself indeed,
And hopes to see what follows after each —
Hence this result. For hast thou not observed
How eyes, essaying to perceive the fine,
Will strain in preparation, otherwise
Unable sharply to perceive at all?
Yet know thou canst that, even in objects plain,
If thou attendest not, 'tis just the same
As if 'twere all the time removed and far.
What marvel, then, that mind doth lose the rest,
Save those to which 'thas given up itself?
So 'tis that we conjecture from small signs

Things wide and weighty, and involve ourselves
In snarls of self-deceit.

SOME VITAL FUNCTIONS

In these affairs

We crave that thou wilt passionately flee
The one offence, and anxiously wilt shun
The error of presuming the clear lights
Of eyes created were that we might see;
Or thighs and knees, apropos upon the feet,
Thuswise can be bended be, that we might step
With goodly strides ahead; or forearms joined
Unto the sturdy uppers, or serving hands
On either side were given, that we might do
Life's own demands. All such interpretation
Is aft-for-fore with inverse reasoning,
Since naught is born in body so that we
May use the same, but birth engenders use:
No seeing ere the lights of eyes were born,
No speaking ere the tongue created was;
But origin of tongue came long before
Discourse of words, and ears created were
Much earlier than any sound was heard;
And all the members, so meseems, were there
Before they got their use: and therefore, they
Could not be gendered for the sake of use.
But contrariwise, contending in the fight
With hand to hand, and rending of the joints,
And fouling of the limbs with gore, was there,
O long before the gleaming spears ere flew;
And nature prompted man to shun a wound,
Before the left arm by the aid of art
Opposed the shielding targe. And, verily,
Yielding the weary body to repose,
Far ancients than cushions of soft beds,
And quenching thirst is earlier than cups.
These objects, therefore, which for use and life
Have been devised, can be conceived as found
For sake of using. But apart from such
Are all which first were born and afterwards
Gave knowledge of their own utility —
Chief in which sort we note the senses, limbs:
Wherefore, again, 'tis quite beyond thy power
To hold that these could thus have been create

For office of utility.

Likewise,

'Tis nothing strange that all the breathing creatures
Seek, even by nature of their frame, their food.
Yes, since I've taught thee that from off the things
Stream and depart innumerable bodies
In modes innumerable too; but most
Must be the bodies streaming from the living —
Which bodies, vexed by motion evermore,
Are through the mouth exhaled innumerable,
When weary creatures pant, or through the sweat
Squeezed forth innumerable from deep within.
Thus body rarefies, so undermined
In all its nature, and pain attends its state.
And so the food is taken to underprop
The tottering joints, and by its interfusion
To re-create their powers, and there stop up
The longing, open-mouthed through limbs and veins,
For eating. And the moist no less departs
Into all regions that demand the moist;
And many heaped-up particles of hot,
Which cause such burnings in these bellies of ours,
The liquid on arriving dissipates
And quenches like a fire, that parching heat
No longer now can scorch the frame. And so,
Thou seest how panting thirst is washed away
From off our body, how the hunger-pang
It, too, appeased.

Now, how it comes that we,
Whene'er we wish, can step with strides ahead,
And how 'tis given to move our limbs about,
And what device is wont to push ahead
This the big load of our corporeal frame,
I'll say to thee — do thou attend what's said.
I say that first some idol-films of walking
Into our mind do fall and smite the mind,
As said before. Thereafter will arises;
For no one starts to do a thing, before
The intellect previsions what it wills;
And what it there pre-visioneth depends
On what that image is. When, therefore, mind
Doth so bestir itself that it doth will
To go and step along, it strikes at once

That energy of soul that's sown about
In all the body through the limbs and frame —
And this is easy of performance, since
The soul is close conjoined with the mind.
Next, soul in turn strikes body, and by degrees
Thus the whole mass is pushed along and moved.
Then too the body rarefies, and air,
Forsooth as ever of such nimbleness,
Comes on and penetrates aboundingly
Through opened pores, and thus is sprinkled round
Unto all smallest places in our frame.
Thus then by these twain factors, severally,
Body is borne like ship with oars and wind.
Nor yet in these affairs is aught for wonder
That particles so fine can whirl around
So great a body and turn this weight of ours;
For wind, so tenuous with its subtle body,
Yet pushes, driving on the mighty ship
Of mighty bulk; one hand directs the same,
Whatever its momentum, and one helm
Whirls it around, whither ye please; and loads,
Many and huge, are moved and hoisted high
By enginery of pulley-blocks and wheels,
With but light strain.

Now, by what modes this sleep
Pours through our members waters of repose
And frees the breast from cares of mind, I'll tell
In verses sweeter than they many are;
Even as the swan's slight note is better far
Than that dispersed clamour of the cranes
Among the southwind's aery clouds. Do thou
Give me sharp ears and a sagacious mind, —
That thou mayst not deny the things to be
Whereof I'm speaking, nor depart away
With bosom scorning these the spoken truths,
Thyself at fault unable to perceive.
Sleep chiefly comes when energy of soul
Hath now been scattered through the frame, and part
Expelled abroad and gone away, and part
Crammed back and settling deep within the frame —
Whereafter then our loosened members droop.
For doubt is none that by the work of soul
Exist in us this sense, and when by slumber

That sense is thwarted, we are bound to think
The soul confounded and expelled abroad —
Yet not entirely, else the frame would lie
Drenched in the everlasting cold of death.
In sooth, where no one part of soul remained
Lurking among the members, even as fire
Lurks buried under many ashes, whence
Could sense amain rekindled be in members,
As flame can rise anew from unseen fire?

By what devices this strange state and new
May be occasioned, and by what the soul
Can be confounded and the frame grow faint,
I will untangle: see to it, thou, that I
Pour forth my words not unto empty winds.
In first place, body on its outer parts —
Since these are touched by neighbouring aery gusts —
Must there be thumped and strook by blows of air
Repeatedly. And therefore almost all
Are covered either with hides, or else with shells,
Or with the horny callus, or with bark.
Yet this same air lashes their inner parts,
When creatures draw a breath or blow it out.
Wherefore, since body thus is flogged alike
Upon the inside and the out, and blows
Come in upon us through the little pores
Even inward to our body's primal parts
And primal elements, there comes to pass
By slow degrees, along our members then,
A kind of overthrow; for then confounded
Are those arrangements of the primal germs
Of body and of mind. It comes to pass
That next a part of soul's expelled abroad,
A part retreateth in recesses hid,
A part, too, scattered all about the frame,
Cannot become united nor engage
In interchange of motion. Nature now
So hedges off approaches and the paths;
And thus the sense, its motions all deranged,
Retires down deep within; and since there's naught,
As 'twere, to prop the frame, the body weakens,
And all the members languish, and the arms
And eyelids fall, and, as ye lie abed,
Even there the houghs will sag and loose their powers.

Again, sleep follows after food, because
The food produces same result as air,
Whilst being scattered round through all the veins;
And much the heaviest is that slumber which,
Full or fatigued, thou takest; since 'tis then
That the most bodies disarrange themselves,
Bruised by labours hard. And in same wise,
This three-fold change: a forcing of the soul
Down deeper, more a casting-forth of it,
A moving more divided in its parts
And scattered more.

And to whate'er pursuit
A man most clings absorbed, or what the affairs
On which we theretofore have tarried much,
And mind hath strained upon the more, we seem
In sleep not rarely to go at the same.
The lawyers seem to plead and cite decrees,
Commanders they to fight and go at frays,
Sailors to live in combat with the winds,
And we ourselves indeed to make this book,
And still to seek the nature of the world
And set it down, when once discovered, here
In these my country's leaves. Thus all pursuits,
All arts in general seem in sleeps to mock
And master the minds of men. And whosoever
Day after day for long to games have given
Attention undivided, still they keep
(As oft we note), even when they've ceased to grasp
Those games with their own senses, open paths
Within the mind wherethrough the idol-films
Of just those games can come. And thus it is
For many a day thereafter those appear
Floating before the eyes, that even awake
They think they view the dancers moving round
Their supple limbs, and catch with both the ears
The liquid song of harp and speaking chords,
And view the same assembly on the seats,
And manifold bright glories of the stage —
So great the influence of pursuit and zest,
And of the affairs wherein 'thas been the wont
Of men to be engaged-nor only men,
But soothly all the animals. Behold,
Thou'lt see the sturdy horses, though outstretched,

Yet sweating in their sleep, and panting ever,
And straining utmost strength, as if for prize,
As if, with barriers opened now...
And hounds of huntsmen oft in soft repose
Yet toss asudden all their legs about,
And growl and bark, and with their nostrils sniff
The winds again, again, as though indeed
They'd caught the scented foot-prints of wild beasts,
And, even when wakened, often they pursue
The phantom images of stags, as though
They did perceive them fleeing on before,
Until the illusion's shaken off and dogs
Come to themselves again. And fawning breed
Of house-bred whelps do feel the sudden urge
To shake their bodies and start from off the ground,
As if beholding stranger-visages.
And ever the fiercer be the stock, the more
In sleep the same is ever bound to rage.
But flee the divers tribes of birds and vex
With sudden wings by night the groves of gods,
When in their gentle slumbers they have dreamed
Of hawks in chase, swooping on for fight.
Again, the minds of mortals which perform
With mighty motions mighty enterprises,
Often in sleep will do and dare the same
In manner like. Kings take the towns by storm,
Succumb to capture, battle on the field,
Raise a wild cry as if their throats were cut
Even then and there. And many wrestle on
And groan with pains, and fill all regions round
With mighty cries and wild, as if then gnawed
By fangs of panther or of lion fierce.
Many amid their slumbers talk about
Their mighty enterprises, and have often
Enough become the proof of their own crimes.
Many meet death; many, as if headlong
From lofty mountains tumbling down to earth
With all their frame, are frenzied in their fright;
And after sleep, as if still mad in mind,
They scarce come to, confounded as they are
By ferment of their frame. The thirsty man,
Likewise, he sits beside delightful spring
Or river and gulpeth down with gaping throat
Nigh the whole stream. And oft the innocent young,

By sleep o'er-mastered, think they lift their dress
By pail or public jordan and then void
The water filtered down their frame entire
And drench the Babylonian coverlets,
Magnificently bright. Again, those males
Into the surging channels of whose years
Now first has passed the seed (engendered
Within their members by the ripened days)
Are in their sleep confronted from without
By idol-images of some fair form —
Tidings of glorious face and lovely bloom,
Which stir and goad the regions turgid now
With seed abundant; so that, as it were
With all the matter acted duly out,
They pour the billows of a potent stream
And stain their garment.

And as said before,
That seed is roused in us when once ripe age
Has made our body strong...
As divers causes give to divers things
Impulse and irritation, so one force
In human kind rouses the human seed
To spurt from man. As soon as ever it issues,
Forced from its first abodes, it passes down
In the whole body through the limbs and frame,
Meeting in certain regions of our thews,
And stirs amain the genitals of man.
The goaded regions swell with seed, and then
Comes the delight to dart the same at what
The mad desire so yearns, and body seeks
That object, whence the mind by love is pierced.
For well-nigh each man falleth toward his wound,
And our blood spurts even toward the spot from whence
The stroke wherewith we are strook, and if indeed
The foe be close, the red jet reaches him.
Thus, one who gets a stroke from Venus' shafts —
Whether a boy with limbs effeminate
Assault him, or a woman darting love
From all her body — that one strains to get
Even to the thing whereby he's hit, and longs
To join with it and cast into its frame
The fluid drawn even from within its own.
For the mute craving doth presage delight.

THE PASSION OF LOVE

This craving 'tis that's Venus unto us:
From this, engender all the lures of love,
From this, O first hath into human hearts
Trickled that drop of joyance which ere long
Is by chill care succeeded. Since, indeed,
Though she thou lovest now be far away,
Yet idol-images of her are near
And the sweet name is floating in thy ear.
But it behooves to flee those images;
And scare afar whatever feeds thy love;
And turn elsewhere thy mind; and vent the sperm,
Within thee gathered, into sundry bodies,
Nor, with thy thoughts still busied with one love,
Keep it for one delight, and so store up
Care for thyself and pain inevitable.
For, lo, the ulcer just by nourishing
Grows to more life with deep inveteracy,
And day by day the fury swells aflame,
And the woe waxes heavier day by day —
Unless thou dost destroy even by new blows
The former wounds of love, and curest them
While yet they're fresh, by wandering freely round
After the freely-wandering Venus, or
Canst lead elsewhere the tumults of thy mind.

Nor doth that man who keeps away from love
Yet lack the fruits of Venus; rather takes
Those pleasures which are free of penalties.
For the delights of Venus, verily,
Are more unmixed for mortals sane-of-soul
Than for those sick-at-heart with love-pining.
Yea, in the very moment of possessing,
Surges the heat of lovers to and fro,
Restive, uncertain; and they cannot fix
On what to first enjoy with eyes and hands.
The parts they sought for, those they squeeze so tight,
And pain the creature's body, close their teeth
Often against her lips, and smite with kiss
Mouth into mouth, — because this same delight
Is not unmixed; and underneath are stings
Which goad a man to hurt the very thing,
Whate'er it be, from whence arise for him
Those germs of madness. But with gentle touch

Venus subdues the pangs in midst of love,
And the admixture of a fondling joy
Doth curb the bites of passion. For they hope
That by the very body whence they caught
The heats of love their flames can be put out.
But nature protests 'tis all quite otherwise;
For this same love it is the one sole thing
Of which, the more we have, the fiercer burns
The breast with fell desire. For food and drink
Are taken within our members; and, since they
Can stop up certain parts, thus, easily
Desire of water is glutted and of bread.
But, lo, from human face and lovely bloom
Naught penetrates our frame to be enjoyed
Save flimsy idol-images and vain —
A sorry hope which oft the winds disperse.
As when the thirsty man in slumber seeks
To drink, and water ne'er is granted him
Wherewith to quench the heat within his members,
But after idols of the liquids strives
And toils in vain, and thirsts even whilst he gulps
In middle of the torrent, thus in love
Venus deludes with idol-images
The lovers. Nor they cannot sate their lust
By merely gazing on the bodies, nor
They cannot with their palms and fingers rub
Aught from each tender limb, the while they stray
Uncertain over all the body. Then,
At last, with members intertwined, when they
Enjoy the flower of their age, when now
Their bodies have sweet presage of keen joys,
And Venus is about to sow the fields
Of woman, greedily their frames they lock,
And mingle the slaver of their mouths, and breathe
Into each other, pressing teeth on mouths —
Yet to no purpose, since they're powerless
To rub off aught, or penetrate and pass
With body entire into body — for oft
They seem to strive and struggle thus to do;
So eagerly they cling in Venus' bonds,
Whilst melt away their members, overcome
By violence of delight. But when at last
Lust, gathered in the thews, hath spent itself,
There come a brief pause in the raging heat —

But then a madness just the same returns
And that old fury visits them again,
When once again they seek and crave to reach
They know not what, all powerless to find
The artifice to subjugate the bane.
In such uncertain state they waste away
With unseen wound.

To which be added too,
They squander powers and with the travail wane;
Be added too, they spend their futile years
Under another's beck and call; their duties
Neglected languish and their honest name
Reeleth sick, sick; and meantime their estates
Are lost in Babylonian tapestries;
And unguents and dainty Sicyonian shoes
Laugh on her feet; and (as ye may be sure)
Big emeralds of green light are set in gold;
And rich sea-purple dress by constant wear
Grows shabby and all soaked with Venus' sweat;
And the well-earned ancestral property
Becometh head-bands, coifs, and many a time
The cloaks, or garments Alidensian
Or of the Cean isle. And banquets, set
With rarest cloth and viands, are prepared —
And games of chance, and many a drinking cup,
And unguents, crowns and garlands. All in vain,
Since from amid the well-spring of delights
Bubbles some drop of bitter to torment
Among the very flowers — when haply mind
Gnaws into self, now stricken with remorse
For slothful years and ruin in baudels,
Or else because she's left him all in doubt
By launching some sly word, which still like fire
Lives wildly, cleaving to his eager heart;
Or else because he thinks she darts her eyes
Too much about and gazes at another, —
And in her face sees traces of a laugh.

These ills are found in prospering love and true;
But in crossed love and helpless there be such
As through shut eyelids thou canst still take in —
Uncounted ills; so that 'tis better far
To watch beforehand, in the way I've shown,
And guard against enticements. For to shun

A fall into the hunting-snares of love
Is not so hard, as to get out again,
When tangled in the very nets, and burst
The stoutly-knotted cords of Aphrodite.
Yet even when there enmeshed with tangled feet,
Still canst thou scape the danger-lest indeed
Thou standest in the way of thine own good,
And overlookest first all blemishes
Of mind and body of thy much preferred,
Desirable dame. For so men do,
Eyeless with passion, and assign to them
Graces not theirs in fact. And thus we see
Creatures in many a wise crooked and ugly
The prosperous sweethearts in a high esteem;
And lovers gird each other and advise
To placate Venus, since their friends are smit
With a base passion — miserable dupes
Who seldom mark their own worst bane of all.
The black-skinned girl is “tawny like the honey”;
The filthy and the fetid’s “negligee”;
The cat-eyed she’s “a little Pallas,” she;
The sinewy and wizened’s “a gazelle”;
The pudgy and the pigmy is “piquant,
One of the Graces sure”; the big and bulky
O she’s “an Admiration, imposante”;
The stuttering and tongue-tied “sweetly lisps”;
The mute girl’s “modest”; and the garrulous,
The spiteful spit-fire, is “a sparkling wit”;
And she who scarcely lives for scrawniness
Becomes “a slender darling”; “delicate”
Is she who’s nearly dead of coughing-fit;
The pursy female with protuberant breasts
She is “like Ceres when the goddess gave
Young Bacchus suck”; the pug-nosed lady-love
“A Satyress, a feminine Silenus”;
The blubber-lipped is “all one luscious kiss” —
A weary while it were to tell the whole.
But let her face possess what charm ye will,
Let Venus’ glory rise from all her limbs, —
Forsooth there still are others; and forsooth
We lived before without her; and forsooth
She does the same things — and we know she does —
All, as the ugly creature, and she scents,
Yes she, her wretched self with vile perfumes;

Whom even her handmaids flee and giggle at
Behind her back. But he, the lover, in tears
Because shut out, covers her threshold o'er
Often with flowers and garlands, and anoints
Her haughty door-posts with the marjoram,
And prints, poor fellow, kisses on the doors —
Admitted at last, if haply but one whiff
Got to him on approaching, he would seek
Decent excuses to go out forthwith;
And his lament, long pondered, then would fall
Down at his heels; and there he'd damn himself
For his fatuity, observing how
He had assigned to that same lady more —
Than it is proper to concede to mortals.
And these our Venuses are 'ware of this.
Wherefore the more are they at pains to hide
All the-behind-the-scenes of life from those
Whom they desire to keep in bonds of love —
In vain, since ne'ertheless thou canst by thought
Drag all the matter forth into the light
And well search out the cause of all these smiles;
And if of graceful mind she be and kind,
Do thou, in thy turn, overlook the same,
And thus allow for poor mortality.
Nor sighs the woman always with feigned love,
Who links her body round man's body locked
And holds him fast, making his kisses wet
With lips sucked into lips; for oft she acts
Even from desire, and, seeking mutual joys,
Incites him there to run love's race-course through.
Nor otherwise can cattle, birds, wild beasts,
And sheep and mares submit unto the males,
Except that their own nature is in heat,
And burns abounding and with gladness takes
Once more the Venus of the mounting males.
And seest thou not how those whom mutual pleasure
Hath bound are tortured in their common bonds?
How often in the cross-roads dogs that pant
To get apart strain eagerly asunder
With utmost might? — When all the while they're fast
In the stout links of Venus. But they'd ne'er
So pull, except they knew those mutual joys —
So powerful to cast them unto snares
And hold them bound. Wherefore again, again,

Even as I say, there is a joint delight.

And when perchance, in mingling seed with his,
The female hath o'erpowered the force of male
And by a sudden fling hath seized it fast,
Then are the offspring, more from mothers' seed,
More like their mothers; as, from fathers' seed,
They're like to fathers. But whom seest to be
Partakers of each shape, one equal blend
Of parents' features, these are generate
From fathers' body and from mothers' blood,
When mutual and harmonious heat hath dashed
Together seeds, aroused along their frames
By Venus' goads, and neither of the twain
Mastereth or is mastered. Happens too
That sometimes offspring can to being come
In likeness of their grandsires, and bring back
Often the shapes of grandsires' sires, because
Their parents in their bodies oft retain
Concealed many primal germs, commixed
In many modes, which, starting with the stock,
Sire handeth down to son, himself a sire;
Whence Venus by a variable chance
Engenders shapes, and diversely brings back
Ancestral features, voices too, and hair.
A female generation rises forth
From seed paternal, and from mother's body
Exist created males: since sex proceeds
No more from singleness of seed than faces
Or bodies or limbs of ours: for every birth
Is from a twofold seed; and what's created
Hath, of that parent which it is more like,
More than its equal share; as thou canst mark, —
Whether the breed be male or female stock.

Nor do the powers divine grudge any man
The fruits of his seed-sowing, so that never
He be called "father" by sweet children his,
And end his days in sterile love forever.
What many men suppose; and gloomily
They sprinkle the altars with abundant blood,
And make the high platforms odorous with burnt gifts,
To render big by plenteous seed their wives —
And plague in vain godheads and sacred lots.
For sterile are these men by seed too thick,

Or else by far too watery and thin.
Because the thin is powerless to cleave
Fast to the proper places, straightaway
It trickles from them, and, returned again,
Retires abortively. And then since seed
More gross and solid than will suit is spent
By some men, either it flies not forth amain
With spurt prolonged enough, or else it fails
To enter suitably the proper places,
Or, having entered, the seed is weakly mixed
With seed of the woman: harmonies of Venus
Are seen to matter vastly here; and some
Impregnate some more readily, and from some
Some women conceive more readily and become
Pregnant. And many women, sterile before
In several marriage-beds, have yet thereafter
Obtained the mates from whom they could conceive
The baby-boys, and with sweet progeny
Grow rich. And even for husbands (whose own wives,
Although of fertile wombs, have borne for them
No babies in the house) are also found
Concordant natures so that they at last
Can bulwark their old age with goodly sons.
A matter of great moment 'tis in truth,
That seeds may mingle readily with seeds
Suited for procreation, and that thick
Should mix with fluid seeds, with thick the fluid.
And in this business 'tis of some import
Upon what diet life is nourished:
For some foods thicken seeds within our members,
And others thin them out and waste away.
And in what modes the fond delight itself
Is carried on — this too importeth vastly.
For commonly 'tis thought that wives conceive
More readily in manner of wild-beasts,
After the custom of the four-foot breeds,
Because so postured, with the breasts beneath
And buttocks then upreared, the seeds can take
Their proper places. Nor is need the least
For wives to use the motions of blandishment;
For thus the woman hinders and resists
Her own conception, if too joyously
Herself she treats the Venus of the man
With haunches heaving, and with all her bosom

Now yielding like the billows of the sea —
Aye, from the ploughshare's even course and track
She throws the furrow, and from proper places
Deflects the spurt of seed. And courtesans
Are thuswise wont to move for their own ends,
To keep from pregnancy and lying in,
And all the while to render Venus more
A pleasure for the men — the which meseems
Our wives have never need of.

Sometimes too
It happens — and through no divinity
Nor arrows of Venus — that a sorry chit
Of scanty grace will be beloved by man;
For sometimes she herself by very deeds,
By her complying ways, and tidy habits,
Will easily accustom thee to pass
With her thy life-time — and, moreover, lo,
Long habitude can gender human love,
Even as an object smitten o'er and o'er
By blows, however lightly, yet at last
Is overcome and wavers. Seest thou not,
Besides, how drops of water falling down
Against the stones at last bore through the stones?

BOOK V

PROEM

O WHO can build with puissant breast a song
Worthy the majesty of these great finds?
Or who in words so strong that he can frame
The fit laudations for deserts of him
Who left us heritors of such vast prizes,
By his own breast discovered and sought out? —
There shall be none, methinks, of mortal stock.
For if must needs be named for him the name
Demanded by the now known majesty
Of these high matters, then a god was he, —
Hear me, illustrious Memmius — a god;
Who first and chief found out that plan of life
Which now is called philosophy, and who
By cunning craft, out of such mighty waves,
Out of such mighty darkness, moored life
In havens so serene, in light so clear.
Compare those old discoveries divine
Of others: lo, according to the tale,
Ceres established for mortality
The grain, and Bacchus juice of vine-born grape,
Though life might yet without these things abide,
Even as report saith now some peoples live.
But man's well-being was impossible
Without a breast all free. Wherefore the more
That man doth justly seem to us a god,
From whom sweet solaces of life, afar
Distributed o'er populous domains,
Now soothe the minds of men. But if thou thinkest
Labours of Hercules excel the same,
Much farther from true reasoning thou farest.
For what could hurt us now that mighty maw
Of Nemeaeon Lion, or what the Boar
Who bristled in Arcadia? Or, again,
O what could Cretan Bull, or Hydra, pest
Of Lerna, fenced with vipers venomous?
Or what the triple-breasted power of her
The three-fold Geryon...
The sojourners in the Stymphalian fens
So dreadfully offend us, or the Steeds

Of Thracian Diomedes breathing fire
From out their nostrils off along the zones
Bistonian and Ismarian? And the Snake,
The dread fierce gazer, guardian of the golden
And gleaming apples of the Hesperides,
Coiled round the tree-trunk with tremendous bulk,
O what, again, could he inflict on us
Along the Atlantic shore and wastes of sea? —
Where neither one of us approacheth nigh
Nor no barbarian ventures. And the rest
Of all those monsters slain, even if alive,
Unconquered still, what injury could they do?
None, as I guess. For so the gluttoned earth
Swarms even now with savage beasts, even now
Is filled with anxious terrors through the woods
And mighty mountains and the forest deeps —
Quarters 'tis ours in general to avoid.
But lest the breast be purged, what conflicts then,
What perils, must bosom, in our own despite!
O then how great and keen the cares of lust
That split the man distraught! How great the fears!
And lo, the pride, grim greed, and wantonness —
How great the slaughters in their train! and lo,
Debaucheries and every breed of sloth!
Therefore that man who subjugated these,
And from the mind expelled, by words indeed,
Not arms, O shall it not be seemly him
To dignify by ranking with the gods? —
And all the more since he was wont to give,
Concerning the immortal gods themselves,
Many pronouncements with a tongue divine,
And to unfold by his pronouncements all
The nature of the world.

ARGUMENT OF THE BOOK AND NEW PROEM AGAINST A TELEOLOGICAL CONCEPT

And walking now
In his own footprints, I do follow through
His reasonings, and with pronouncements teach
The covenant whereby all things are framed,
How under that covenant they must abide
Nor ever prevail to abrogate the aeons'
Inexorable decrees, — how (as we've found),
In class of mortal objects, o'er all else,

The mind exists of earth-born frame create
And impotent unscathed to abide
Across the mighty aeons, and how come
In sleep those idol-apparitions,
That so befool intelligence when we
Do seem to view a man whom life has left.
Thus far we've gone; the order of my plan
Hath brought me now unto the point where I
Must make report how, too, the universe
Consists of mortal body, born in time,
And in what modes that congregated stuff
Established itself as earth and sky,
Ocean, and stars, and sun, and ball of moon;
And then what living creatures rose from out
The old telluric places, and what ones
Were never born at all; and in what mode
The human race began to name its things
And use the varied speech from man to man;
And in what modes hath bosomed in their breasts
That awe of gods, which halloweth in all lands
Fanes, altars, groves, lakes, idols of the gods.
Also I shall untangle by what power
The steersman nature guides the sun's courses,
And the meanderings of the moon, lest we,
Perchance, should fancy that of own free will
They circle their perennial courses round,
Timing their motions for increase of crops
And living creatures, or lest we should think
They roll along by any plan of gods.
For even those men who have learned full well
That godheads lead a long life free of care,
If yet meanwhile they wonder by what plan
Things can go on (and chiefly yon high things
Observed o'erhead on the ethereal coasts),
Again are hurried back unto the fears
Of old religion and adopt again
Harsh masters, deemed almighty, — wretched men,
Unwitting what can be and what cannot,
And by what law to each its scope prescribed,
Its boundary stone that clings so deep in Time.

But for the rest, — lest we delay thee here
Longer by empty promises — behold,
Before all else, the seas, the lands, the sky:

O Memmius, their threefold nature, lo,
Their bodies three, three aspects so unlike,
Three frames so vast, a single day shall give
Unto annihilation! Then shall crash
That massive form and fabric of the world
Sustained so many aeons! Nor do I
Fail to perceive how strange and marvellous
This fact must strike the intellect of man, —
Annihilation of the sky and earth
That is to be, — and with what toil of words
'Tis mine to prove the same; as happens oft
When once ye offer to man's listening ears
Something before unheard of, but may not
Subject it to the view of eyes for him
Nor put it into hand — the sight and touch,
Whereby the opened highways of belief
Lead most directly into human breast
And regions of intelligence. But yet
I will speak out. The fact itself, perchance,
Will force belief in these my words, and thou
Mayst see, in little time, tremendously
With risen commotions of the lands all things
Quaking to pieces — which afar from us
May she, the steersman Nature, guide: and may
Reason, O rather than the fact itself,
Persuade us that all things can be o'erthrown
And sink with awful-sounding breakage down!

But ere on this I take a step to utter
Oracles holier and soundlier based
Than ever the Pythian pronounced for men
From out the tripod and the Delphian laurel,
I will unfold for thee with learned words
Many a consolation, lest perchance,
Still bridled by religion, thou suppose
Lands, sun, and sky, sea, constellations, moon,
Must dure forever, as of frame divine —
And so conclude that it is just that those,
(After the manner of the Giants), should all
Pay the huge penalties for monstrous crime,
Who by their reasonings do overshake
The ramparts of the universe and wish
There to put out the splendid sun of heaven,
Branding with mortal talk immortal things —

Though these same things are even so far removed
From any touch of deity and seem
So far unworthy of numbering with the gods,
That well they may be thought to furnish rather
A goodly instance of the sort of things
That lack the living motion, living sense.
For sure 'tis quite beside the mark to think
That judgment and the nature of the mind
In any kind of body can exist —
Just as in ether can't exist a tree,
Nor clouds in the salt sea, nor in the fields
Can fishes live, nor blood in timber be,
Nor sap in boulders: fixed and arranged
Where everything may grow and have its place.
Thus nature of mind cannot arise alone
Without the body, nor have its being far
From thews and blood. Yet if 'twere possible? —
Much rather might this very power of mind
Be in the head, the shoulders, or the heels,
And, born in any part soever, yet
In the same man, in the same vessel abide
But since within this body even of ours
Stands fixed and appears arranged sure
Where soul and mind can each exist and grow,
Deny we must the more that they can dure
Outside the body and the breathing form
In rotting clods of earth, in the sun's fire,
In water, or in ether's skiey coasts.
Therefore these things no whit are furnished
With sense divine, since never can they be
With life-force quickened.

Likewise, thou canst ne'er
Believe the sacred seats of gods are here
In any regions of this mundane world;
Indeed, the nature of the gods, so subtle,
So far removed from these our senses, scarce
Is seen even by intelligence of mind.
And since they've ever eluded touch and thrust
Of human hands, they cannot reach to grasp
Aught tangible to us. For what may not
Itself be touched in turn can never touch.
Wherefore, besides, also their seats must be
Unlike these seats of ours, — even subtle too,

As meet for subtle essence — as I'll prove
Hereafter unto thee with large discourse.
Further, to say that for the sake of men
They willed to prepare this world's magnificence,
And that 'tis therefore duty and behoof
To praise the work of gods as worthy praise,
And that 'tis sacrilege for men to shake
Ever by any force from out their seats
What hath been stablished by the Forethought old
To everlasting for races of mankind,
And that 'tis sacrilege to assault by words
And overtopple all from base to beam, —
Memmius, such notions to concoct and pile,
Is verily — to dote. Our gratefulness,
O what emoluments could it confer
Upon Immortals and upon the Blessed
That they should take a step to manage aught
For sake of us? Or what new factor could,
After so long a time, inveigle them —
The hitherto reposeful — to desire
To change their former life? For rather he
Whom old things chafe seems likely to rejoice
At new; but one that in fore-passed time
Hath chanced upon no ill, through goodly years,
O what could ever enkindle in such an one
Passion for strange experiment? Or what
The evil for us, if we had ne'er been born? —
As though, forsooth, in darkling realms and woe
Our life were lying till should dawn at last
The day-spring of creation! Whosoever
Hath been begotten wills perforce to stay
In life, so long as fond delight detains;
But whoso ne'er hath tasted love of life,
And ne'er was in the count of living things,
What hurts it him that he was never born?
Whence, further, first was planted in the gods
The archetype for gendering the world
And the fore-notion of what man is like,
So that they knew and pre-conceived with mind
Just what they wished to make? Or how were known
Ever the energies of primal germs,
And what those germs, by interchange of place,
Could thus produce, if nature's self had not
Given example for creating all?

For in such wise primordials of things,
Many in many modes, astir by blows
From immemorial aeons, in motion too
By their own weights, have evermore been wont
To be so borne along and in all modes
To meet together and to try all sorts
Which, by combining one with other, they
Are powerful to create, that thus it is
No marvel now, if they have also fallen
Into arrangements such, and if they've passed
Into vibrations such, as those whereby
This sum of things is carried on to-day
By fixed renewal. But knew I never what
The seeds primordial were, yet would I dare
This to affirm, even from deep judgments based
Upon the ways and conduct of the skies —
This to maintain by many a fact besides —
That in no wise the nature of all things
For us was fashioned by a power divine —
So great the faults it stands encumbered with.
First, mark all regions which are overarched
By the prodigious reaches of the sky:
One yawning part thereof the mountain-chains
And forests of the beasts do have and hold;
And cliffs, and desert fens, and wastes of sea
(Which sunder afar the beaches of the lands)
Possess it merely; and, again, thereof
Well-nigh two-thirds intolerable heat
And a perpetual fall of frost doth rob
From mortal kind. And what is left to till,
Even that the force of nature would o'errun
With brambles, did not human force oppose, —
Long wont for livelihood to groan and sweat
Over the two-pronged mattock and to cleave
The soil in twain by pressing on the plough.

Unless, by the ploughshare turning the fruitful clods
And kneading the mould, we quicken into birth,
[The crops] spontaneously could not come up
Into the free bright air. Even then sometimes,
When things acquired by the sternest toil
Are now in leaf, are now in blossom all,
Either the skiey sun with baneful heats
Parches, or sudden rains or chilling rime

Destroys, or flaws of winds with furious whirl
Torment and twist. Beside these matters, why
Doth nature feed and foster on land and sea
The dreadful breed of savage beasts, the foes
Of the human clan? Why do the seasons bring
Distempers with them? Wherefore stalks at large
Death, so untimely? Then, again, the babe,
Like to the castaway of the raging surf,
Lies naked on the ground, speechless, in want
Of every help for life, when nature first
Hath poured him forth upon the shores of light
With birth-pangs from within the mother's womb,
And with a plaintive wail he fills the place, —
As well befitting one for whom remains
In life a journey through so many ills.
But all the flocks and herds and all wild beasts
Come forth and grow, nor need the little rattles,
Nor must be treated to the humouring nurse's
Dear, broken chatter; nor seek they divers clothes
To suit the changing skies; nor need, in fine,
Nor arms, nor lofty ramparts, wherewithal
Their own to guard — because the earth herself
And nature, artificer of the world, bring forth
Aboundingly all things for all.

THE WORLD IS NOT ETERNAL

And first,
Since body of earth and water, air's light breath,
And fiery exhalations (of which four
This sum of things is seen to be compact)
So all have birth and perishable frame,
Thus the whole nature of the world itself
Must be conceived as perishable too.
For, verily, those things of which we see
The parts and members to have birth in time
And perishable shapes, those same we mark
To be invariably born in time
And born to die. And therefore when I see
The mightiest members and the parts of this
Our world consumed and begot again,
'Tis mine to know that also sky above
And earth beneath began of old in time
And shall in time go under to disaster.

And lest in these affairs thou deemest me
To have seized upon this point by sleight to serve
My own caprice — because I have assumed
That earth and fire are mortal things indeed,
And have not doubted water and the air
Both perish too and have affirmed the same
To be again begotten and wax big —
Mark well the argument: in first place, lo,
Some certain parts of earth, grievously parched
By unremitting suns, and trampled on
By a vast throng of feet, exhale abroad
A powdery haze and flying clouds of dust,
Which the stout winds disperse in the whole air.
A part, moreover, of her sod and soil
Is summoned to inundation by the rains;
And rivers graze and gouge the banks away.
Besides, whatever takes a part its own
In fostering and increasing [aught]...

Is rendered back; and since, beyond a doubt,
Earth, the all-mother, is beheld to be
Likewise the common sepulchre of things,
Therefore thou seest her minished of her plenty,
And then again augmented with new growth.

And for the rest, that sea, and streams, and springs
Forever with new waters overflow,
And that perennially the fluids well,
Needeth no words — the mighty flux itself
Of multitudinous waters round about
Declareth this. But whatso water first
Streams up is ever straightway carried off,
And thus it comes to pass that all in all
There is no overflow; in part because
The burly winds (that over-sweep amain)
And skiey sun (that with his rays dissolves)
Do minish the level seas; in part because
The water is diffused underground
Through all the lands. The brine is filtered off,
And then the liquid stuff seeps back again
And all regathers at the river-heads,
Whence in fresh-water currents on it flows
Over the lands, adown the channels which
Were cleft erstwhile and erstwhile bore along
The liquid-footed floods.

Now, then, of air
I'll speak, which hour by hour in all its body
Is changed innumerably. For whatso'er
Streams up in dust or vapour off of things,
The same is all and always borne along
Into the mighty ocean of the air;
And did not air in turn restore to things
Bodies, and thus recruit them as they stream,
All things by this time had resolved been
And changed into air. Therefore it never
Ceases to be engendered off of things
And to return to things, since verily
In constant flux do all things stream.

Likewise,
The abounding well-spring of the liquid light,
The ethereal sun, doth flood the heaven o'er
With constant flux of radiance ever new,
And with fresh light supplies the place of light,
Upon the instant. For whatever effulgence
Hath first streamed off, no matter where it falls,
Is lost unto the sun. And this 'tis thine
To know from these examples: soon as clouds
Have first begun to under-pass the sun,
And, as it were, to rend the rays of light
In twain, at once the lower part of them
Is lost entire, and earth is overcast
Where'er the thunderheads are rolled along —
So know thou mayst that things forever need
A fresh replenishment of gleam and glow,
And each effulgence, foremost flashed forth,
Perisheth one by one. Nor otherwise
Can things be seen in sunlight, lest alway
The fountain-head of light supply new light.
Indeed your earthly beacons of the night,
The hanging lampions and the torches, bright
With darting gleams and dense with livid soot,
Do hurry in like manner to supply
With ministering heat new light amain;
Are all alive to quiver with their fires, —
Are so alive, that thus the light ne'er leaves
The spots it shines on, as if rent in twain:
So speedily is its destruction veiled
By the swift birth of flame from all the fires.

Thus, then, we must suppose that sun and moon
And stars dart forth their light from under-births
Ever and ever new, and whatso flames
First rise do perish always one by one —
Lest, haply, thou shouldst think they each endure
Inviolable.

Again, perceivest not
How stones are also conquered by Time? —
Not how the lofty towers ruin down,
And boulders crumble? — Not how shrines of gods
And idols crack outworn? — Nor how indeed
The holy Influence hath yet no power
There to postpone the Terminals of Fate,
Or headway make 'gainst Nature's fixed decrees?
Again, behold we not the monuments
Of heroes, now in ruins, asking us,
In their turn likewise, if we don't believe
They also age with eld? Behold we not
The rended basalt ruining amain
Down from the lofty mountains, powerless
To dure and dree the mighty forces there
Of finite time? — for they would never fall
Rended asudden, if from infinite Past
They had prevailed against all engin'ries
Of the assaulting aeons, with no crash.

Again, now look at This, which round, above,
Contains the whole earth in its one embrace:
If from itself it procreates all things —
As some men tell — and takes them to itself
When once destroyed, entirely must it be
Of mortal birth and body; for whate'er
From out itself giveth to other things
Increase and food, the same perforce must be
Minished, and then recruited when it takes
Things back into itself.

Besides all this,
If there had been no origin-in-birth
Of lands and sky, and they had ever been
The everlasting, why, ere Theban war
And obsequies of Troy, have other bards
Not also chanted other high affairs?
Whither have sunk so oft so many deeds

Of heroes? Why do those deeds live no more,
Ingrafted in eternal monuments
Of glory? Verily, I guess, because
The Sum is new, and of a recent date
The nature of our universe, and had
Not long ago its own exordium.
Wherefore, even now some arts are being still
Refined, still increased: now unto ships
Is being added many a new device;
And but the other day musician-folk
Gave birth to melic sounds of organing;
And, then, this nature, this account of things
Hath been discovered latterly, and I
Myself have been discovered only now,
As first among the first, able to turn
The same into ancestral Roman speech.
Yet if, perchance, thou deemest that ere this
Existed all things even the same, but that
Perished the cycles of the human race
In fiery exhalations, or cities fell
By some tremendous quaking of the world,
Or rivers in fury, after constant rains,
Had plunged forth across the lands of earth
And whelmed the towns — then, all the more must thou
Confess, defeated by the argument,
That there shall be annihilation too
Of lands and sky. For at a time when things
Were being taxed by maladies so great,
And so great perils, if some cause more fell
Had then assailed them, far and wide they would
Have gone to disaster and supreme collapse.
And by no other reasoning are we
Seen to be mortal, save that all of us
Sicken in turn with those same maladies
With which have sickened in the past those men
Whom nature hath removed from life.

gain,
Whatever abides eternal must indeed
Either repel all strokes, because 'tis made
Of solid body, and permit no entrance
Of aught with power to sunder from within
The parts compact — as are those seeds of stuff
Whose nature we've exhibited before;

Or else be able to endure through time
For this: because they are from blows exempt,
As is the void, the which abides untouched,
Unsmitten by any stroke; or else because
There is no room around, whereto things can,
As 'twere, depart in dissolution all, —
Even as the sum of sums eternal is,
Without or place beyond whereto things may
Asunder fly, or bodies which can smite,
And thus dissolve them by the blows of might.
But not of solid body, as I've shown,
Exists the nature of the world, because
In things is intermingled there a void;
Nor is the world yet as the void, nor are,
Moreover, bodies lacking which, percase,
Rising from out the infinite, can fell
With fury-whirlwinds all this sum of things,
Or bring upon them other cataclysm
Of peril strange; and yonder, too, abides
The infinite space and the profound abyss —
Whereinto, lo, the ramparts of the world
Can yet be shivered. Or some other power
Can pound upon them till they perish all.
Thus is the door of doom, O nowise barred
Against the sky, against the sun and earth
And deep-sea waters, but wide open stands
And gloats upon them, monstrous and agape.
Wherefore, again, 'tis needful to confess
That these same things are born in time; for things
Which are of mortal body could indeed
Never from infinite past until to-day
Have spurned the multitudinous assaults
Of the immeasurable aeons old.

Again, since battle so fiercely one with other
The four most mighty members the world,
Aroused in an all unholy war,
Seest not that there may be for them an end
Of the long strife? — Or when the skiey sun
And all the heat have won dominion o'er
The sucked-up waters all? — And this they try
Still to accomplish, though as yet they fail, —
For so aboundingly the streams supply
New store of waters that 'tis rather they

Who menace the world with inundations vast
From forth the unplumbed chasms of the sea.
But vain — since winds (that over-sweep amain)
And skiey sun (that with his rays dissolves)
Do minish the level seas and trust their power
To dry up all, before the waters can
Arrive at the end of their endeavouring.
Breathing such vasty warfare, they contend
In balanced strife the one with other still
Concerning mighty issues, — though indeed
The fire was once the more victorious,
And once — as goes the tale — the water won
A kingdom in the fields. For fire o’ermastered
And licked up many things and burnt away,
What time the impetuous horses of the Sun
Snatched Phaethon headlong from his skiey road
Down the whole ether and over all the lands.
But the omnipotent Father in keen wrath
Then with the sudden smite of thunderbolt
Did hurl the mighty-minded hero off
Those horses to the earth. And Sol, his sire,
Meeting him as he fell, caught up in hand
The ever-blazing lampion of the world,
And drave together the pell-mell horses there
And yoked them all a-tremble, and amain,
Steering them over along their own old road,
Restored the cosmos, — as forsooth we hear
From songs of ancient poets of the Greeks —
A tale too far away from truth, meseems.
For fire can win when from the infinite
Has risen a larger throng of particles
Of fiery stuff; and then its powers succumb,
Somehow subdued again, or else at last
It shrivels in torrid atmospheres the world.
And whilom water too began to win —
As goes the story — when it overwhelmed
The lives of men with billows; and thereafter,
When all that force of water-stuff which forth
From out the infinite had risen up
Did now retire, as somehow turned aside,
The rain-storms stopped, and streams their fury checked.

FORMATION OF THE WORLD AND
ASTRONOMICAL QUESTIONS

But in what modes that conflux of first-stuff

Did found the multitudinous universe
Of earth, and sky, and the unfathomed deeps
Of ocean, and courses of the sun and moon,
I'll now in order tell. For of a truth
Neither by counsel did the primal germs
'Stablish themselves, as by keen act of mind,
Each in its proper place; nor did they make,
Forsooth, a compact how each germ should move;
But, lo, because primordials of things,
Many in many modes, astir by blows
From immemorial aeons, in motion too
By their own weights, have evermore been wont
To be so borne along and in all modes
To meet together and to try all sorts
Which, by combining one with other, they
Are powerful to create: because of this
It comes to pass that those primordials,
Diffused far and wide through mighty aeons,
The while they unions try, and motions too,
Of every kind, meet at the last amain,
And so become oft the commencements fit
Of mighty things — earth, sea, and sky, and race
Of living creatures.

 In that long-ago
The wheel of the sun could nowhere be discerned
Flying far up with its abounding blaze,
Nor constellations of the mighty world,
Nor ocean, nor heaven, nor even earth nor air.
Nor aught of things like unto things of ours
Could then be seen — but only some strange storm
And a prodigious hurly-burly mass
Compounded of all kinds of primal germs,
Whose battling discords in disorder kept
Interstices, and paths, coherencies,
And weights, and blows, encounterings, and motions,
Because, by reason of their forms unlike
And varied shapes, they could not all thuswise
Remain conjoined nor harmoniously
Have interplay of movements. But from there
Portions began to fly asunder, and like
With like to join, and to block out a world,
And to divide its members and dispose
Its mightier parts — that is, to set secure

The lofty heavens from the lands, and cause
The sea to spread with waters separate,
And fires of ether separate and pure
Likewise to congregate apart.

For, lo,
First came together the earthy particles
(As being heavy and intertangled) there
In the mid-region, and all began to take
The lowest abodes; and ever the more they got
One with another intertangled, the more
They pressed from out their mass those particles
Which were to form the sea, the stars, the sun,
And moon, and ramparts of the mighty world —
For these consist of seeds more smooth and round
And of much smaller elements than earth.
And thus it was that ether, fraught with fire,
First broke away from out the earthen parts,
Athrough the innumerable pores of earth,
And raised itself aloft, and with itself
Bore lightly off the many starry fires;
And not far otherwise we often see

And the still lakes and the perennial streams
Exhale a mist, and even as earth herself
Is seen at times to smoke, when first at dawn
The light of the sun, the many-rayed, begins
To redden into gold, over the grass
Begemmed with dew. When all of these are brought
Together overhead, the clouds on high
With now concreted body weave a cover
Beneath the heavens. And thuswise ether too,
Light and diffusive, with concreted body
On all sides spread, on all sides bent itself
Into a dome, and, far and wide diffused
On unto every region on all sides,
Thus hedged all else within its greedy clasp.
Hard upon ether came the origins
Of sun and moon, whose globes revolve in air
Midway between the earth and mightiest ether, —
For neither took them, since they weighed too little
To sink and settle, but too much to glide
Along the upmost shores; and yet they are
In such a wise midway between the twain
As ever to whirl their living bodies round,

And ever to dure as parts of the wide Whole;
In the same fashion as certain members may
In us remain at rest, whilst others move.
When, then, these substances had been withdrawn,
Amain the earth, where now extend the vast
Cerulean zones of all the level seas,
Caved in, and down along the hollows poured
The whirlpools of her brine; and day by day
The more the tides of ether and rays of sun
On every side constrained into one mass
The earth by lashing it again, again,
Upon its outer edges (so that then,
Being thus beat upon, 'twas all condensed
About its proper centre), ever the more
The salty sweat, from out its body squeezed,
Augmented ocean and the fields of foam
By seeping through its frame, and all the more
Those many particles of heat and air
Escaping, began to fly aloft, and form,
By condensation there afar from earth,
The high refulgent circuits of the heavens.
The plains began to sink, and windy slopes
Of the high mountains to increase; for rocks
Could not subside, nor all the parts of ground
Settle alike to one same level there.

Thus, then, the massy weight of earth stood firm
With now concreted body, when (as 'twere)
All of the slime of the world, heavy and gross,
Had run together and settled at the bottom,
Like lees or bilge. Then ocean, then the air,
Then ether herself, the fraught-with-fire, were all
Left with their liquid bodies pure and free,
And each more lighter than the next below;
And ether, most light and liquid of the three,
Floats on above the long aerial winds,
Nor with the brawling of the winds of air
Mingles its liquid body. It doth leave
All there — those under-realms below her heights —
There to be overset in whirlwinds wild, —
Doth leave all there to brawl in wayward gusts,
Whilst, gliding with a fixed impulse still,
Itself it bears its fires along. For, lo,
That ether can flow thus steadily on, on,

With one unaltered urge, the Pontus proves —
That sea which floweth forth with fixed tides,
Keeping one onward tenor as it glides.

And that the earth may there abide at rest
In the mid-region of the world, it needs
Must vanish bit by bit in weight and lessen,
And have another substance underneath,
Conjoined to it from its earliest age
In linked unison with the vasty world's
Realms of the air in which it roots and lives.
On this account, the earth is not a load,
Nor presses down on winds of air beneath;
Even as unto a man his members be
Without all weight — the head is not a load
Unto the neck; nor do we feel the whole
Weight of the body to centre in the feet.
But whatso weights come on us from without,
Weights laid upon us, these harass and chafe,
Though often far lighter. For to such degree
It matters always what the innate powers
Of any given thing may be. The earth
Was, then, no alien substance fetched amain,
And from no alien firmament cast down
On alien air; but was conceived, like air,
In the first origin of this the world,
As a fixed portion of the same, as now
Our members are seen to be a part of us.

Besides, the earth, when of a sudden shook
By the big thunder, doth with her motion shake
All that's above her — which she ne'er could do
By any means, were earth not bounden fast
Unto the great world's realms of air and sky:
For they cohere together with common roots,
Conjoined both, even from their earliest age,
In linked unison. Aye, seest thou not
That this most subtle energy of soul
Supports our body, though so heavy a weight, —
Because, indeed, 'tis with it so conjoined
In linked unison? What power, in sum,
Can raise with agile leap our body aloft,
Save energy of mind which steers the limbs?
Now seest thou not how powerful may be
A subtle nature, when conjoined it is

With heavy body, as air is with the earth
Conjoined, and energy of mind with us?

Now let us sing what makes the stars to move.
In first place, if the mighty sphere of heaven
Revolveth round, then needs we must aver
That on the upper and the under pole
Presses a certain air, and from without
Confines them and encloseth at each end;
And that, moreover, another air above
Streams on athwart the top of the sphere and tends
In same direction as are rolled along
The glittering stars of the eternal world;
Or that another still streams on below
To whirl the sphere from under up and on
In opposite direction — as we see
The rivers turn the wheels and water-scoops.
It may be also that the heavens do all
Remain at rest, whilst yet are borne along
The lucid constellations; either because
Swift tides of ether are by sky enclosed,
And whirl around, seeking a passage out,
And everywhere make roll the starry fires
Through the Summanian regions of the sky;
Or else because some air, streaming along
From an eternal quarter off beyond,
Whileth the driven fires, or, then, because
The fires themselves have power to creep along,
Going wherever their food invites and calls,
And feeding their flaming bodies everywhere
Throughout the sky. Yet which of these is cause
In this our world 'tis hard to say for sure;
But what can be throughout the universe,
In divers worlds on divers plan create,
This only do I show, and follow on
To assign unto the motions of the stars
Even several causes which 'tis possible
Exist throughout the universal All;
Of which yet one must be the cause even here
Which maketh motion for our constellations.
Yet to decide which one of them it be
Is not the least the business of a man
Advancing step by cautious step, as I.

Nor can the sun's wheel larger be by much

Nor its own blaze much less than either seems
Unto our senses. For from whatso spaces
Fires have the power on us to cast their beams
And blow their scorching exhalations forth
Against our members, those same distances
Take nothing by those intervals away
From bulk of flames; and to the sight the fire
Is nothing shrunken. Therefore, since the heat
And the outpoured light of skiey sun
Arrive our senses and caress our limbs,
Form too and bigness of the sun must look
Even here from earth just as they really be,
So that thou canst scarce nothing take or add.
And whether the journeying moon illuminate
The regions round with bastard beams, or throw
From off her proper body her own light, —
Whichever it be, she journeys with a form
Naught larger than the form doth seem to be
Which we with eyes of ours perceive. For all
The far removed objects of our gaze
Seem through much air confused in their look
Ere minished in their bigness. Wherefore, moon,
Since she presents bright look and clear-cut form,
May there on high by us on earth be seen
Just as she is with extreme bounds defined,
And just of the size. And lastly, whatso fires
Of ether thou from earth beholdest, these
Thou mayst consider as possibly of size
The least bit less, or larger by a hair
Than they appear — since whatso fires we view
Here in the lands of earth are seen to change
From time to time their size to less or more
Only the least, when more or less away,
So long as still they bicker clear, and still
Their glow's perceived.

Nor need there be for men
Astonishment that yonder sun so small
Can yet send forth so great a light as fills
Oceans and all the lands and sky aflood,
And with its fiery exhalations steeps
The world at large. For it may be, indeed,
That one vast-flowing well-spring of the whole
Wide world from here hath opened and out-gushed,

And shot its light abroad; because thuswise
The elements of fiery exhalations
From all the world around together come,
And thuswise flow into a bulk so big
That from one single fountain-head may stream
This heat and light. And seest thou not, indeed,
How widely one small water-spring may wet
The meadow-lands at times and flood the fields?
'Tis even possible, besides, that heat
From forth the sun's own fire, albeit that fire
Be not a great, may permeate the air
With the fierce hot — if but, perchance, the air
Be of condition and so tempered then
As to be kindled, even when beat upon
Only by little particles of heat —
Just as we sometimes see the standing grain
Or stubble straw in conflagration all
From one lone spark. And possibly the sun,
Agleam on high with rosy lampion,
Possesses about him with invisible heats
A plenteous fire, by no effulgence marked,
So that he maketh, he, the Fraught-with-fire,
Increase to such degree the force of rays.

Nor is there one sure cause revealed to men
How the sun journeys from his summer haunts
On to the mid-most winter turning-points
In Capricorn, the thence reverting veers
Back to solstitial goals of Cancer; nor
How 'tis the moon is seen each month to cross
That very distance which in traversing
The sun consumes the measure of a year.
I say, no one clear reason hath been given
For these affairs. Yet chief in likelihood
Seemeth the doctrine which the holy thought
Of great Democritus lays down: that ever
The nearer the constellations be to earth
The less can they by whirling of the sky
Be borne along, because those skiey powers
Of speed aloft do vanish and decrease
In under-regions, and the sun is thus
Left by degrees behind amongst those signs
That follow after, since the sun he lies
Far down below the starry signs that blaze;

And the moon lags even tardier than the sun:
In just so far as is her course removed
From upper heaven and nigh unto the lands,
In just so far she fails to keep the pace
With starry signs above; for just so far
As feebler is the whirl that bears her on,
(Being, indeed, still lower than the sun),
In just so far do all the starry signs,
Circling around, o'ertake her and o'erpass.
Therefore it happens that the moon appears
More swiftly to return to any sign
Along the Zodiac, than doth the sun,
Because those signs do visit her again
More swiftly than they visit the great sun.
It can be also that two streams of air
Alternately at fixed periods
Blow out from transverse regions of the world,
Of which the one may thrust the sun away
From summer-signs to mid-most winter goals
And rigors of the cold, and the other then
May cast him back from icy shades of chill
Even to the heat-fraught regions and the signs
That blaze along the Zodiac. So, too,
We must suppose the moon and all the stars,
Which through the mighty and sidereal years
Roll round in mighty orbits, may be sped
By streams of air from regions alternate.
Seest thou not also how the clouds be sped
By contrary winds to regions contrary,
The lower clouds diversely from the upper?
Then, why may yonder stars in ether there
Along their mighty orbits not be borne
By currents opposite the one to other?

But night o'erwhelms the lands with vasty murk
Either when sun, after his diurnal course,
Hath walked the ultimate regions of the sky
And wearily hath panted forth his fires,
Shivered by their long journeying and wasted
By traversing the multitudinous air,
Or else because the self-same force that drave
His orb along above the lands compels
Him then to turn his course beneath the lands.
Matuta also at a fixed hour

Spreadeth the roseate morning out along
The coasts of heaven and deploys the light,
Either because the self-same sun, returning
Under the lands, aspires to seize the sky,
Striving to set it blazing with his rays
Ere he himself appear, or else because
Fires then will congregate and many seeds
Of heat are wont, even at a fixed time,
To stream together — gendering evermore
New suns and light. Just so the story goes
That from the Idaean mountain-tops are seen
Dispersed fires upon the break of day
Which thence combine, as ‘twere, into one ball
And form an orb. Nor yet in these affairs
Is aught for wonder that these seeds of fire
Can thus together stream at time so fixed
And shape anew the splendour of the sun.
For many facts we see which come to pass
At fixed time in all things: burgeon shrubs
At fixed time, and at a fixed time
They cast their flowers; and Eld commands the teeth,
At time as surely fixed, to drop away,
And Youth commands the growing boy to bloom
With the soft down and let from both his cheeks
The soft beard fall. And lastly, thunder-bolts,
Snow, rains, clouds, winds, at seasons of the year
Nowise unfixed, all do come to pass.
For where, even from their old primordial start
Causes have ever worked in such a way,
And where, even from the world’s first origin,
Thuswise have things befallen, so even now
After a fixed order they come round
In sequence also.

Likewise, days may wax
Whilst the nights wane, and daylight minished be
Whilst nights do take their augmentations,
Either because the self-same sun, coursing
Under the lands and over in two arcs,
A longer and a briefer, doth dispart
The coasts of ether and divides in twain
His orbit all unequally, and adds,
As round he’s borne, unto the one half there
As much as from the other half he’s ta’en,

Until he then arrives that sign of heaven
Where the year's node renders the shades of night
Equal unto the periods of light.
For when the sun is midway on his course
Between the blasts of northwind and of south,
Heaven keeps his two goals parted equally,
By virtue of the fixed position old
Of the whole starry Zodiac, through which
That sun, in winding onward, takes a year,
Illumining the sky and all the lands
With oblique light — as men declare to us
Who by their diagrams have charted well
Those regions of the sky which be adorned
With the arranged signs of Zodiac.
Or else, because in certain parts the air
Under the lands is denser, the tremulous
Bright beams of fire do waver tardily,
Nor easily can penetrate that air
Nor yet emerge unto their rising-place:
For this it is that nights in winter time
Do linger long, ere comes the many-rayed
Round Badge of the day. Or else because, as said,
In alternating seasons of the year
Fires, now more quick, and now more slow, are wont
To stream together, — the fires which make the sun
To rise in some one spot — therefore it is
That those men seem to speak the truth [who hold
A new sun is with each new daybreak born].

The moon she possibly doth shine because
Strook by the rays of sun, and day by day
May turn unto our gaze her light, the more
She doth recede from orb of sun, until,
Facing him opposite across the world,
She hath with full effulgence gleamed abroad,
And, at her rising as she soars above,
Hath there observed his setting; thence likewise
She needs must hide, as 'twere, her light behind
By slow degrees, the nearer now she glides,
Along the circle of the Zodiac,
From her far place toward fires of yonder sun, —
As those men hold who feign the moon to be
Just like a ball and to pursue a course
Betwixt the sun and earth. There is, again,

Some reason to suppose that moon may roll
With light her very own, and thus display
The varied shapes of her resplendence there.
For near her is, perchance, another body,
Invisible, because devoid of light,
Borne on and gliding all along with her,
Which in three modes may block and blot her disk.
Again, she may revolve upon herself,
Like to a ball's sphere — if perchance that be —
One half of her dyed o'er with glowing light,
And by the revolution of that sphere
She may beget for us her varying shapes,
Until she turns that fiery part of her
Full to the sight and open eyes of men;
Thence by slow stages round and back she whirls,
Withdrawing thus the luminiferous part
Of her sphered mass and ball, as, verily,
The Babylonian doctrine of Chaldees,
Refuting the art of Greek astrologers,
Labours, in opposition, to prove sure —
As if, forsooth, the thing for which each fights,
Might not alike be true, — or aught there were
Wherefore thou mightest risk embracing one
More than the other notion. Then, again,
Why a new moon might not forevermore
Created be with fixed successions there
Of shapes and with configurations fixed,
And why each day that bright created moon
Might not miscarry and another be,
In its stead and place, engendered anew,
'Tis hard to show by reason, or by words
To prove absurd — since, lo, so many things
Can be create with fixed successions:
Spring-time and Venus come, and Venus' boy,
The winged harbinger, steps on before,
And hard on Zephyr's foot-prints Mother Flora,
Sprinkling the ways before them, filleth all
With colours and with odours excellent;
Whereafter follows arid Heat, and he
Companioned is by Ceres, dusty one,
And by the Etesian Breezes of the north;
Then cometh Autumn on, and with him steps
Lord Bacchus, and then other Seasons too
And other Winds do follow — the high roar

Of great Volturnus, and the Southwind strong
With thunder-bolts. At last earth's Shortest-Day
Bears on to men the snows and brings again
The numbing cold. And Winter follows her,
His teeth with chills a-chatter. Therefore, 'tis
The less a marvel, if at fixed time
A moon is thus begotten and again
At fixed time destroyed, since things so many
Can come to being thus at fixed time.
Likewise, the sun's eclipses and the moon's
Far occultations rightly thou mayst deem

As due to several causes. For, indeed,
Why should the moon be able to shut out
Earth from the light of sun, and on the side
To earthward thrust her high head under sun,
Opposing dark orb to his glowing beams —
And yet, at same time, one suppose the effect
Could not result from some one other body
Which glides devoid of light forevermore?
Again, why could not sun, in weakened state,
At fixed time for-lose his fires, and then,
When he has passed on along the air
Beyond the regions, hostile to his flames,
That quench and kill his fires, why could not he
Renew his light? And why should earth in turn
Have power to rob the moon of light, and there,
Herself on high, keep the sun hid beneath,
Whilst the moon glideth in her monthly course
Athrough the rigid shadows of the cone? —
And yet, at same time, some one other body
Not have the power to under-pass the moon,
Or glide along above the orb of sun,
Breaking his rays and outspread light asunder?
And still, if moon herself refulgent be
With her own sheen, why could she not at times
In some one quarter of the mighty world
Grow weak and weary, whilst she passeth through
Regions unfriendly to the beams her own?

ORIGINS OF VEGETABLE AND ANIMAL LIFE

And now to what remains! — Since I've resolved
By what arrangements all things come to pass
Through the blue regions of the mighty world, —

How we can know what energy and cause
Started the various courses of the sun
And the moon's goings, and by what far means
They can succumb, the while with thwarted light,
And veil with shade the unsuspecting lands,
When, as it were, they blink, and then again
With open eye survey all regions wide,
Resplendent with white radiance — I do now
Return unto the world's primeval age
And tell what first the soft young fields of earth
With earliest parturition had decreed
To raise in air unto the shores of light
And to entrust unto the wayward winds.
In the beginning, earth gave forth, around
The hills and over all the length of plains,
The race of grasses and the shining green;
The flowery meadows sparkled all aglow
With greening colour, and thereafter, lo,
Unto the divers kinds of trees was given
An emulous impulse mightily to shoot,
With a free rein, aloft into the air.
As feathers and hairs and bristles are begot
The first on members of the four-foot breeds
And on the bodies of the strong-y-winged,
Thus then the new Earth first of all put forth
Grasses and shrubs, and afterward begat
The mortal generations, there upsprung —
Innumerable in modes innumerable —
After diverging fashions. For from sky
These breathing-creatures never can have dropped,
Nor the land-dwellers ever have come up
Out of sea-pools of salt. How true remains,
How merited is that adopted name
Of earth— "The Mother!" — since from out the earth
Are all begotten. And even now arise
From out the loams how many living things —
Concreted by the rains and heat of the sun.
Wherefore 'tis less a marvel, if they sprang
In Long Ago more many, and more big,
Matured of those days in the fresh young years
Of earth and ether. First of all, the race
Of the winged ones and parti-coloured birds,
Hatched out in spring-time, left their eggs behind;
As now-a-days in summer tree-cricket

Do leave their shiny husks of own accord,
Seeking their food and living. Then it was
This earth of thine first gave unto the day
The mortal generations; for prevailed
Among the fields abounding hot and wet.
And hence, where any fitting spot was given,
There 'gan to grow womb-cavities, by roots
Affixed to earth. And when in ripened time
The age of the young within (that sought the air
And fled earth's damp) had burst these wombs, O then
Would Nature thither turn the pores of earth
And make her spurt from open veins a juice
Like unto milk; even as a woman now
Is filled, at child-bearing, with the sweet milk,
Because all that swift stream of aliment
Is thither turned unto the mother-breasts.
There earth would furnish to the children food;
Warmth was their swaddling cloth, the grass their bed
Abounding in soft down. Earth's newness then
Would rouse no dour spells of the bitter cold,
Nor extreme heats nor winds of mighty powers —
For all things grow and gather strength through time
In like proportions; and then earth was young.

Wherefore, again, again, how merited
Is that adopted name of Earth — The Mother! —
Since she herself begat the human race,
And at one well-nigh fixed time brought forth
Each breast that ranges raving round about
Upon the mighty mountains and all birds
Aerial with many a varied shape.
But, lo, because her bearing years must end,
She ceased, like to a woman worn by eld.
For lapsing aeons change the nature of
The whole wide world, and all things needs must take
One status after other, nor aught persists
Forever like itself. All things depart;
Nature she changeth all, compelleth all
To transformation. Lo, this moulders down,
A-slack with weary eld, and that, again,
Prosper in glory, issuing from contempt.
In suchwise, then, the lapsing aeons change
The nature of the whole wide world, and earth
Taket one status after other. And what

She bore of old, she now can bear no longer,
And what she never bore, she can to-day.

In those days also the telluric world
Strove to beget the monsters that upsprung
With their astounding visages and limbs —
The Man-woman — a thing betwixt the twain,
Yet neither, and from either sex remote —
Some gruesome Boggles orphaned of the feet,
Some widowed of the hands, dumb Horrors too
Without a mouth, or blind Ones of no eye,
Or Bulks all shackled by their legs and arms
Cleaving unto the body fore and aft,
Thuswise, that never could they do or go,
Nor shun disaster, nor take the good they would.
And other prodigies and monsters earth
Was then begetting of this sort — in vain,
Since Nature banned with horror their increase,
And powerless were they to reach unto
The coveted flower of fair maturity,
Or to find aliment, or to intertwine
In works of Venus. For we see there must
Concur in life conditions manifold,
If life is ever by begetting life
To forge the generations one by one:
First, foods must be; and, next, a path whereby
The seeds of impregnation in the frame
May ooze, released from the members all;
Last, the possession of those instruments
Whereby the male with female can unite,
The one with other in mutual ravishments.

And in the ages after monsters died,
Perforce there perished many a stock, unable
By propagation to forge a progeny.
For whatsoever creatures thou beholdest
Breathing the breath of life, the same have been
Even from their earliest age preserved alive
By cunning, or by valour, or at least
By speed of foot or wing. And many a stock
Remaineth yet, because of use to man,
And so committed to man's guardianship.
Valour hath saved alive fierce lion-breeds
And many another terrorizing race,
Cunning the foxes, flight the antlered stags.

Light-sleeping dogs with faithful heart in breast,
However, and every kind begot from seed
Of beasts of draft, as, too, the woolly flocks
And horned cattle, all, my Memmius,
Have been committed to guardianship of men.
For anxiously they fled the savage beasts,
And peace they sought and their abundant foods,
Obtained with never labours of their own,
Which we secure to them as fit rewards
For their good service. But those beasts to whom
Nature has granted naught of these same things —
Beasts quite unfit by own free will to thrive
And vain for any service unto us
In thanks for which we should permit their kind
To feed and be in our protection safe —
Those, of a truth, were wont to be exposed,
Enshackled in the gruesome bonds of doom,
As prey and booty for the rest, until
Nature reduced that stock to utter death.

But Centaurs ne'er have been, nor can there be
Creatures of twofold stock and double frame,
Compact of members alien in kind,
Yet formed with equal function, equal force
In every bodily part — a fact thou mayst,
However dull thy wits, well learn from this:
The horse, when his three years have rolled away,
Flowers in his prime of vigour; but the boy
Not so, for oft even then he gropes in sleep
After the milky nipples of the breasts,
An infant still. And later, when at last
The lusty powers of horses and stout limbs,
Now weak through lapsing life, do fail with age,
Lo, only then doth youth with flowering years
Begin for boys, and clothe their ruddy cheeks
With the soft down. So never deem, perchance,
That from a man and from the seed of horse,
The beast of draft, can Centaurs be composed
Or e'er exist alive, nor Scyllas be —
The half-fish bodies girdled with mad dogs —
Nor others of this sort, in whom we mark
Members discordant each with each; for ne'er
At one same time they reach their flower of age
Or gain and lose full vigour of their frame,

And never burn with one same lust of love,
And never in their habits they agree,
Nor find the same foods equally delightful —
Sooth, as one oft may see the bearded goats
Batten upon the hemlock which to man
Is violent poison. Once again, since flame
Is wont to scorch and burn the tawny bulks
Of the great lions as much as other kinds
Of flesh and blood existing in the lands,
How could it be that she, Chimaera lone,
With triple body — fore, a lion she;
And aft, a dragon; and betwixt, a goat —
Might at the mouth from out the body belch
Infuriate flame? Wherefore, the man who feigns
Such beings could have been engendered
When earth was new and the young sky was fresh
(Basing his empty argument on new)
May babble with like reason many whims
Into our ears: he'll say, perhaps, that then
Rivers of gold through every landscape flowed,
That trees were wont with precious stones to flower,
Or that in those far aeons man was born
With such gigantic length and lift of limbs
As to be able, based upon his feet,
Deep oceans to bestride or with his hands
To whirl the firmament around his head.
For though in earth were many seeds of things
In the old time when this telluric world
First poured the breeds of animals abroad,
Still that is nothing of a sign that then
Such hybrid creatures could have been begot
And limbs of all beasts heterogeneous
Have been together knit; because, indeed,
The divers kinds of grasses and the grains
And the delightful trees — which even now
Spring up abounding from within the earth —
Can still ne'er be begotten with their stems
Begrafted into one; but each sole thing
Proceeds according to its proper wont
And all conserve their own distinctions based
In nature's fixed decree.

ORIGINS AND SAVAGE PERIOD OF MANKIND

But mortal man

Was then far hardier in the old champaign,
As well he should be, since a hardier earth
Had him begotten; builded too was he
Of bigger and more solid bones within,
And knit with stalwart sinews through the flesh,
Nor easily seized by either heat or cold,
Or alien food or any ail or irk.
And whilst so many lustrums of the sun
Rolled on across the sky, men led a life
After the roving habit of wild beasts.
Not then were sturdy guiders of curved ploughs,
And none knew then to work the fields with iron,
Or plant young shoots in holes of delved loam,
Or lop with hooked knives from off high trees
The boughs of yester-year. What sun and rains
To them had given, what earth of own accord
Created then, was boon enough to glad
Their simple hearts. Mid acorn-laden oaks
Would they refresh their bodies for the nonce;
And the wild berries of the arbut-tree,
Which now thou seest to ripen purple-red
In winter time, the old telluric soil
Would bear then more abundant and more big.
And many coarse foods, too, in long ago
The blooming freshness of the rank young world
Produced, enough for those poor wretches there.
And rivers and springs would summon them of old
To slake the thirst, as now from the great hills
The water's down-rush calls aloud and far
The thirsty generations of the wild.
So, too, they sought the grottos of the Nymphs —
The woodland haunts discovered as they ranged —
From forth of which they knew that gliding rills
With gush and splash abounding laved the rocks,
The dripping rocks, and trickled from above
Over the verdant moss; and here and there
Welled up and burst across the open flats.
As yet they knew not to enkindle fire
Against the cold, nor hairy pelts to use
And clothe their bodies with the spoils of beasts;
But huddled in groves, and mountain-caves, and woods,
And 'mongst the thickets hid their squalid backs,
When driven to flee the lashings of the winds
And the big rains. Nor could they then regard

The general good, nor did they know to use
In common any customs, any laws:
Whatever of booty fortune unto each
Had proffered, each alone would bear away,
By instinct trained for self to thrive and live.
And Venus in the forests then would link
The lovers' bodies; for the woman yielded
Either from mutual flame, or from the man's
Impetuous fury and insatiate lust,
Or from a bribe — as acorn-nuts, choice pears,
Or the wild berries of the arbute-tree.
And trusting wondrous strength of hands and legs,
They'd chase the forest-wanderers, the beasts;
And many they'd conquer, but some few they fled,
A-skulk into their hiding-places...

With the flung stones and with the ponderous heft
Of gnarled branch. And by the time of night
O'ertaken, they would throw, like bristly boars,
Their wildman's limbs naked upon the earth,
Rolling themselves in leaves and fronded boughs.
Nor would they call with lamentations loud
Around the fields for daylight and the sun,
Quaking and wand'ring in shadows of the night;
But, silent and buried in a sleep, they'd wait
Until the sun with rosy flambeau brought
The glory to the sky. From childhood wont
Ever to see the dark and day begot
In times alternate, never might they be
Wildered by wild misgiving, lest a night
Eternal should possess the lands, with light
Of sun withdrawn forever. But their care
Was rather that the clans of savage beasts
Would often make their sleep-time horrible
For those poor wretches; and, from home y-driven,
They'd flee their rocky shelters at approach
Of boar, the spumy-lipped, or lion strong,
And in the midnight yield with terror up
To those fierce guests their beds of out-spread leaves.

And yet in those days not much more than now
Would generations of mortality
Leave the sweet light of fading life behind.
Indeed, in those days here and there a man,
More oftener snatched upon, and gulped by fangs,

Afforded the beasts a food that roared alive,
Echoing through groves and hills and forest-trees,
Even as he viewed his living flesh entombed
Within a living grave; whilst those whom flight
Had saved, with bone and body bitten, shrieked,
Pressing their quivering palms to loathsome sores,
With horrible voices for eternal death —
Until, forlorn of help, and witless what
Might medicine their wounds, the writhing pangs
Took them from life. But not in those far times
Would one lone day give over unto doom
A soldiery in thousands marching on
Beneath the battle-banners, nor would then
The ramping breakers of the main seas dash
Whole argosies and crews upon the rocks.
But ocean uprisen would often rave in vain,
Without all end or outcome, and give up
Its empty menacings as lightly too;
Nor soft seductions of a serene sea
Could lure by laughing billows any man
Out to disaster: for the science bold
Of ship-sailing lay dark in those far times.
Again, 'twas then that lack of food gave o'er
Men's fainting limbs to dissolution: now
'Tis plenty overwhelms. Unwary, they
Oft for themselves themselves would then outpour
The poison; now, with nicer art, themselves
They give the drafts to others.

BEGINNINGS OF CIVILIZATION

Afterwards,
When huts they had procured and pelts and fire,
And when the woman, joined unto the man,
Withdrew with him into one dwelling place,

Were known; and when they saw an offspring born
From out themselves, then first the human race
Began to soften. For 'twas now that fire
Rendered their shivering frames less staunch to bear,
Under the canopy of the sky, the cold;
And Love reduced their shaggy hardness;
And children, with the prattle and the kiss,
Soon broke the parents' haughty temper down.
Then, too, did neighbours 'gin to league as friends,

Eager to wrong no more or suffer wrong,
And urged for children and the womankind
Mercy, of fathers, whilst with cries and gestures
They stammered hints how meet it was that all
Should have compassion on the weak. And still,
Though concord not in every wise could then
Begotten be, a good, a goodly part
Kept faith inviolate — or else mankind
Long since had been unutterably cut off,
And propagation never could have brought
The species down the ages.

Lest, perchance,
Concerning these affairs thou ponderest
In silent meditation, let me say
'Twas lightning brought primevally to earth
The fire for mortals, and from thence hath spread
O'er all the lands the flames of heat. For thus
Even now we see so many objects, touched
By the celestial flames, to flash aglow,
When thunderbolt has dowered them with heat.
Yet also when a many-branched tree,
Beaten by winds, writhes swaying to and fro,
Pressing 'gainst branches of a neighbour tree,
There by the power of mighty rub and rub
Is fire engendered; and at times out-flares
The scorching heat of flame, when boughs do chafe
Against the trunks. And of these causes, either
May well have given to mortal men the fire.
Next, food to cook and soften in the flame
The sun instructed, since so oft they saw
How objects mellowed, when subdued by warmth
And by the raining blows of fiery beams,
Through all the fields.

And more and more each day
Would men more strong in sense, more wise in heart,
Teach them to change their earlier mode and life
By fire and new devices. Kings began
Cities to found and citadels to set,
As strongholds and asylums for themselves,
And flocks and fields to portion for each man
After the beauty, strength, and sense of each —
For beauty then imported much, and strength
Had its own rights supreme. Thereafter, wealth

Discovered was, and gold was brought to light,
Which soon of honour stripped both strong and fair;
For men, however beautiful in form
Or valorous, will follow in the main
The rich man's party. Yet were man to steer
His life by sounder reasoning, he'd own
Abounding riches, if with mind content
He lived by thrift; for never, as I guess,
Is there a lack of little in the world.
But men wished glory for themselves and power
Even that their fortunes on foundations firm
Might rest forever, and that they themselves,
The opulent, might pass a quiet life —
In vain, in vain; since, in the strife to climb
On to the heights of honour, men do make
Their pathway terrible; and even when once
They reach them, envy like the thunderbolt
At times will smite, O hurling headlong down
To murkiest Tartarus, in scorn; for, lo,
All summits, all regions loftier than the rest,
Smoke, blasted as by envy's thunderbolts;
So better far in quiet to obey,
Than to desire chief mastery of affairs
And ownership of empires. Be it so;
And let the weary sweat their life-blood out
All to no end, battling in hate along
The narrow path of man's ambition;
Since all their wisdom is from others' lips,
And all they seek is known from what they've heard
And less from what they've thought. Nor is this folly
Greater to-day, nor greater soon to be,
Than 'twas of old.

And therefore kings were slain,
And pristine majesty of golden thrones
And haughty sceptres lay o'erturned in dust;
And crowns, so splendid on the sovereign heads,
Soon bloody under the proletarian feet,
Groaned for their glories gone — for erst o'er-much
Dreaded, thereafter with more greedy zest
Trampled beneath the rabble heel. Thus things
Down to the vilest lees of brawling mobs
Succumbed, whilst each man sought unto himself
Dominion and supremacy. So next

Some wiser heads instructed men to found
The magisterial office, and did frame
Codes that they might consent to follow laws.
For humankind, o'er wearied with a life
Fostered by force, was ailing from its feuds;
And so the sooner of its own free will
Yielded to laws and strictest codes. For since
Each hand made ready in its wrath to take
A vengeance fiercer than by man's fair laws
Is now conceded, men on this account
Loathed the old life fostered by force. 'Tis thence
That fear of punishments defiles each prize
Of wicked days; for force and fraud ensnare
Each man around, and in the main recoil
On him from whence they sprung. Not easy 'tis
For one who violates by ugly deeds
The bonds of common peace to pass a life
Composed and tranquil. For albeit he 'scape
The race of gods and men, he yet must dread
'Twill not be hid forever — since, indeed,
So many, oft babbling on amid their dreams
Or raving in sickness, have betrayed themselves
(As stories tell) and published at last
Old secrets and the sins.

But nature 'twas
Urged men to utter various sounds of tongue
And need and use did mould the names of things,
About in same wise as the lack-speech years
Compel young children unto gesturings,
Making them point with finger here and there
At what's before them. For each creature feels
By instinct to what use to put his powers.
Ere yet the bull-calf's scarce begotten horns
Project above his brows, with them he 'gins
Enraged to butt and savagely to thrust.
But whelps of panthers and the lion's cubs
With claws and paws and bites are at the fray
Already, when their teeth and claws be scarce
As yet engendered. So again, we see
All breeds of winged creatures trust to wings
And from their fledgling pinions seek to get
A fluttering assistance. Thus, to think
That in those days some man apportioned round

To things their names, and that from him men learned
Their first nomenclature, is foolery.
For why could he mark everything by words
And utter the various sounds of tongue, what time
The rest may be supposed powerless
To do the same? And, if the rest had not
Already one with other used words,
Whence was implanted in the teacher, then,
Fore-knowledge of their use, and whence was given
To him alone primordial faculty
To know and see in mind what 'twas he willed?
Besides, one only man could scarce subdue
An overmastered multitude to choose
To get by heart his names of things. A task
Not easy 'tis in any wise to teach
And to persuade the deaf concerning what
'Tis needful for to do. For ne'er would they
Allow, nor ne'er in anywise endure
Perpetual vain dingdong in their ears
Of spoken sounds unheard before. And what,
At last, in this affair so wondrous is,
That human race (in whom a voice and tongue
Were now in vigour) should by divers words
Denote its objects, as each divers sense
Might prompt? — since even the speechless herds, aye, since
The very generations of wild beasts
Are wont dissimilar and divers sounds
To rouse from in them, when there's fear or pain,
And when they burst with joys. And this, forsooth,
'Tis thine to know from plainest facts: when first
Huge flabby jowls of mad Molossian hounds,
Baring their hard white teeth, begin to snarl,
They threaten, with infuriate lips peeled back,
In sounds far other than with which they bark
And fill with voices all the regions round.
And when with fondling tongue they start to lick
Their puppies, or do toss them round with paws,
Feigning with gentle bites to gape and snap,
They fawn with yelps of voice far other than
Than when, alone within the house, they bay,
Or whimpering slink with cringing sides from blows.
Again the neighing of the horse, is that
Not seen to differ likewise, when the stud
In buoyant flower of his young years raves,

Goaded by winged Love, amongst the mares,
And when with widening nostrils out he snorts
The call to battle, and when haply he
Whinnies at times with terror-quaking limbs?
Lastly, the flying race, the dappled birds,
Hawks, ospreys, sea-gulls, searching food and life
Amid the ocean billows in the brine,
Utter at other times far other cries
Than when they fight for food, or with their prey
Struggle and strain. And birds there are which change
With changing weather their own raucous songs —
As long-lived generations of the crows
Or flocks of rooks, when they be said to cry
For rain and water and to call at times
For winds and gales. Ergo, if divers moods
Compel the brutes, though speechless evermore,
To send forth divers sounds, O truly then
How much more likely 'twere that mortal men
In those days could with many a different sound
Denote each separate thing.

And now what cause
Hath spread divinities of gods abroad
Through mighty nations, and filled the cities full
Of the high altars, and led to practices
Of solemn rites in season — rites which still
Flourish in midst of great affairs of state
And midst great centres of man's civic life,
The rites whence still a poor mortality
Is grafted that quaking awe which rears aloft
Still the new temples of gods from land to land
And drives mankind to visit them in throngs
On holy days— 'tis not so hard to give
Reason thereof in speech. Because, in sooth,
Even in those days would the race of man
Be seeing excelling visages of gods
With mind awake; and in his sleeps, yet more —
Bodies of wondrous growth. And, thus, to these
Would men attribute sense, because they seemed
To move their limbs and speak pronouncements high,
Befitting glorious visage and vast powers.
And men would give them an eternal life,
Because their visages forevermore
Were there before them, and their shapes remained,

And chiefly, however, because men would not think
Beings augmented with such mighty powers
Could well by any force o'er-mastered be.
And men would think them in their happiness
Excelling far, because the fear of death
Vexed no one of them at all, and since
At same time in men's sleeps men saw them do
So many wonders, and yet feel therefrom
Themselves no weariness. Besides, men marked
How in a fixed order rolled around
The systems of the sky, and changed times
Of annual seasons, nor were able then
To know thereof the causes. Therefore 'twas
Men would take refuge in consigning all
Unto divinities, and in feigning all
Was guided by their nod. And in the sky
They set the seats and vaults of gods, because
Across the sky night and the moon are seen
To roll along — moon, day, and night, and night's
Old awesome constellations evermore,
And the night-wandering fireballs of the sky,
And flying flames, clouds, and the sun, the rains,
Snow and the winds, the lightnings, and the hail,
And the swift rumblings, and the hollow roar
Of mighty menacings forevermore.

O humankind unhappy! — when it ascribed
Unto divinities such awesome deeds,
And coupled thereto rigours of fierce wrath!
What groans did men on that sad day beget
Even for themselves, and O what wounds for us,
What tears for our children's children! Nor, O man,
Is thy true piety in this: with head
Under the veil, still to be seen to turn
Fronting a stone, and ever to approach
Unto all altars; nor so prone on earth
Forward to fall, to spread upturned palms
Before the shrines of gods, nor yet to dew
Altars with profuse blood of four-foot beasts,
Nor vows with vows to link. But rather this:
To look on all things with a master eye
And mind at peace. For when we gaze aloft
Upon the skiey vaults of yon great world
And ether, fixed high o'er twinkling stars,

And into our thought there come the journeyings
Of sun and moon, O then into our breasts,
O'erburdened already with their other ills,
Begins forthwith to rear its sudden head
One more misgiving: lest o'er us, perchance,
It be the gods' immeasurable power
That rolls, with varied motion, round and round
The far white constellations. For the lack
Of aught of reasons tries the puzzled mind:
Whether was ever a birth-time of the world,
And whether, likewise, any end shall be
How far the ramparts of the world can still
Outstand this strain of ever-roused motion,
Or whether, divinely with eternal weal
Endowed, they can through endless tracts of age
Glide on, defying the o'er-mighty powers
Of the immeasurable ages. Lo,
What man is there whose mind with dread of gods
Cringes not close, whose limbs with terror-spell
Crouch not together, when the parched earth
Quakes with the horrible thunderbolt amain,
And across the mighty sky the rumblings run?
Do not the peoples and the nations shake,
And haughty kings do they not hug their limbs,
Strook through with fear of the divinities,
Lest for aught foully done or madly said
The heavy time be now at hand to pay?
When, too, fierce force of fury-winds at sea
Sweepeth a navy's admiral down the main
With his stout legions and his elephants,
Doth he not seek the peace of gods with vows,
And beg in prayer, a-tremble, lulled winds
And friendly gales? — in vain, since, often up-caught
In fury-cyclones, is he borne along,
For all his mouthings, to the shoals of doom.
Ah, so irrevocably some hidden power
Betramples forevermore affairs of men,
And visibly grindeth with its heel in mire
The lictors' glorious rods and axes dire,
Having them in derision! Again, when earth
From end to end is rocking under foot,
And shaken cities ruin down, or threaten
Upon the verge, what wonder is it then
That mortal generations abase themselves,

And unto gods in all affairs of earth
Assign as last resort almighty powers
And wondrous energies to govern all?

Now for the rest: copper and gold and iron
Discovered were, and with them silver's weight
And power of lead, when with prodigious heat
The conflagrations burned the forest trees
Among the mighty mountains, by a bolt
Of lightning from the sky, or else because
Men, warring in the woodlands, on their foes
Had hurled fire to frighten and dismay,
Or yet because, by goodness of the soil
Invited, men desired to clear rich fields
And turn the countryside to pasture-lands,
Or slay the wild and thrive upon the spoils.
(For hunting by pit-fall and by fire arose
Before the art of hedging the covert round
With net or stirring it with dogs of chase.)
Howso the fact, and from what cause soever
The flamy heat with awful crack and roar
Had there devoured to their deepest roots
The forest trees and baked the earth with fire,
Then from the boiling veins began to ooze
O rivulets of silver and of gold,
Of lead and copper too, collecting soon
Into the hollow places of the ground.
And when men saw the cooled lumps anon
To shine with splendour-sheen upon the ground,
Much taken with that lustrous smooth delight,
They 'gan to pry them out, and saw how each
Had got a shape like to its earthy mould.
Then would it enter their heads how these same lumps,
If melted by heat, could into any form
Or figure of things be run, and how, again,
If hammered out, they could be nicely drawn
To sharpest points or finest edge, and thus
Yield to the forgers tools and give them power
To chop the forest down, to hew the logs,
To shave the beams and planks, besides to bore
And punch and drill. And men began such work
At first as much with tools of silver and gold
As with the impetuous strength of the stout copper;
But vainly — since their over-mastered power

Would soon give way, unable to endure,
Like copper, such hard labour. In those days
Copper it was that was the thing of price;
And gold lay useless, blunted with dull edge.
Now lies the copper low, and gold hath come
Unto the loftiest honours. Thus it is
That rolling ages change the times of things:
What erst was of a price, becomes at last
A discard of no honour; whilst another
Succeeds to glory, issuing from contempt,
And day by day is sought for more and more,
And, when 'tis found, doth flower in men's praise,
Objects of wondrous honour.

Now, Memmius,
How nature of iron discovered was, thou mayst
Of thine own self divine. Man's ancient arms
Were hands, and nails and teeth, stones too and boughs —
Breakage of forest trees — and flame and fire,
As soon as known. Thereafter force of iron
And copper discovered was; and copper's use
Was known ere iron's, since more tractable
Its nature is and its abundance more.
With copper men to work the soil began,
With copper to rouse the hurly waves of war,
To straw the monstrous wounds, and seize away
Another's flocks and fields. For unto them,
Thus armed, all things naked of defence
Readily yielded. Then by slow degrees
The sword of iron succeeded, and the shape
Of brazen sickle into scorn was turned:
With iron to cleave the soil of earth they 'gan,
And the contentions of uncertain war
Were rendered equal.

And, lo, man was wont
Armed to mount upon the ribs of horse
And guide him with the rein, and play about
With right hand free, oft times before he tried
Perils of war in yoked chariot;
And yoked pairs abreast came earlier
Than yokes of four, or scythed chariots
Whereinto clomb the men-at-arms. And next
The Punic folk did train the elephants —
Those curst Lucanian oxen, hideous,

The serpent-handed, with turrets on their bulks —
To dure the wounds of war and panic-strike
The mighty troops of Mars. Thus Discord sad
Begot the one Thing after other, to be
The terror of the nations under arms,
And day by day to horrors of old war
She added an increase.

Bulls, too, they tried

In war's grim business; and essayed to send
Outrageous boars against the foes. And some
Sent on before their ranks puissant lions
With armed trainers and with masters fierce
To guide and hold in chains — and yet in vain,
Since fleshed with pell-mell slaughter, fierce they flew,
And blindly through the squadrons havoc wrought,
Shaking the frightful crests upon their heads,
Now here, now there. Nor could the horsemen calm
Their horses, panic-breasted at the roar,
And rein them round to front the foe. With spring
The infuriate she-lions would up-leap
Now here, now there; and whoso came apace
Against them, these they'd rend across the face;
And others unwitting from behind they'd tear
Down from their mounts, and twining round them, bring
Tumbling to earth, o'ermastered by the wound,
And with those powerful fangs and hooked claws
Fasten upon them. Bulls would toss their friends,
And trample under foot, and from beneath
Rip flanks and bellies of horses with their horns,
And with a threat'ning forehead jam the sod;
And boars would gore with stout tusks their allies,
Splashing in fury their own blood on spears
Splintered in their own bodies, and would fell
In rout and ruin infantry and horse.
For there the beasts-of-saddle tried to scape
The savage thrusts of tusk by shying off,
Or rearing up with hoofs a-paw in air.
In vain — since there thou mightest see them sink,
Their sinews severed, and with heavy fall
Bestrew the ground. And such of these as men
Supposed well-trained long ago at home,
Were in the thick of action seen to foam
In fury, from the wounds, the shrieks, the flight,

The panic, and the tumult; nor could men
Aught of their numbers rally. For each breed
And various of the wild beasts fled apart
Hither or thither, as often in wars to-day
Flee those Lucanian oxen, by the steel
Grievously mangled, after they have wrought
Upon their friends so many a dreadful doom.
(If 'twas, indeed, that thus they did at all:
But scarcely I'll believe that men could not
With mind foreknow and see, as sure to come,
Such foul and general disaster. — This
We, then, may hold as true in the great All,
In divers worlds on divers plan create, —
Somewhere afar more likely than upon
One certain earth.) But men chose this to do
Less in the hope of conquering than to give
Their enemies a goodly cause of woe,
Even though thereby they perished themselves,
Since weak in numbers and since wanting arms.

Now, clothes of roughly inter-plaited strands
Were earlier than loom-wove coverings;
The loom-wove later than man's iron is,
Since iron is needful in the weaving art,
Nor by no other means can there be wrought
Such polished tools — the treadles, spindles, shuttles,
And sounding yarn-beams. And nature forced the men,
Before the woman kind, to work the wool:
For all the male kind far excels in skill,
And cleverer is by much — until at last
The rugged farmer folk jeered at such tasks,
And so were eager soon to give them o'er
To women's hands, and in more hardy toil
To harden arms and hands.

But nature herself,
Mother of things, was the first seed-sower
And primal grafter; since the berries and acorns,
Dropping from off the trees, would there beneath
Put forth in season swarms of little shoots;
Hence too men's fondness for ingrafting slips
Upon the boughs and setting out in holes
The young shrubs o'er the fields. Then would they try
Ever new modes of tilling their loved crofts,
And mark they would how earth improved the taste

Of the wild fruits by fond and fostering care.
And day by day they'd force the woods to move
Still higher up the mountain, and to yield
The place below for tilth, that there they might,
On plains and uplands, have their meadow-plats,
Cisterns and runnels, crops of standing grain,
And happy vineyards, and that all along
O'er hillocks, intervalles, and plains might run
The silvery-green belt of olive-trees,
Marking the plotted landscape; even as now
Thou seest so marked with varied loveliness
All the terrain which men adorn and plant
With rows of goodly fruit-trees and hedge round
With thriving shrubberies sown.

But by the mouth
To imitate the liquid notes of birds
Was earlier far 'mongst men than power to make,
By measured song, melodious verse and give
Delight to ears. And whistlings of the wind
Athrough the hollows of the reeds first taught
The peasantry to blow into the stalks
Of hollow hemlock-herb. Then bit by bit
They learned sweet plainings, such as pipe out-pours,
Beaten by finger-tips of singing men,
When heard through unpathed groves and forest deeps
And woodsy meadows, through the untrod haunts
Of shepherd folk and spots divinely still.
Thus time draws forward each and everything
Little by little unto the midst of men,
And reason uplifts it to the shores of light.
These tunes would soothe and glad the minds of mortals
When sated with food, — for songs are welcome then.
And often, lounging with friends in the soft grass
Beside a river of water, underneath
A big tree's branches, merrily they'd refresh
Their frames, with no vast outlay — most of all
If the weather were smiling and the times of the year
Were painting the green of the grass around with flowers.
Then jokes, then talk, then peals of jollity
Would circle round; for then the rustic muse
Was in her glory; then would antic Mirth
Prompt them to garland head and shoulders about
With chaplets of intertwined flowers and leaves,

And to dance onward, out of tune, with limbs
Clownishly swaying, and with clownish foot
To beat our mother earth — from whence arose
Laughter and peals of jollity, for, lo,
Such frolic acts were in their glory then,
Being more new and strange. And wakeful men
Found solaces for their unsleeping hours
In drawing forth variety of notes,
In modulating melodies, in running
With puckered lips along the tuned reeds,
Whence, even in our day do the watchmen guard
These old traditions, and have learned well
To keep true measure. And yet they no whit
Do get a larger fruit of gladsomeness
Than got the woodland aborigines
In olden times. For what we have at hand —
If theretofore naught sweeter we have known —
That chiefly pleases and seems best of all;
But then some later, likely better, find
Destroys its worth and changes our desires
Regarding good of yesterday.

And thus
Began the loathing of the acorn; thus
Abandoned were those beds with grasses strewn
And with the leaves beladen. Thus, again,
Fell into new contempt the pelts of beasts —
Erstwhile a robe of honour, which, I guess,
Aroused in those days envy so malign
That the first wearer went to woeful death
By ambushades, — and yet that hairy prize,
Rent into rags by greedy foemen there
And splashed by blood, was ruined utterly
Beyond all use or vantage. Thus of old
'Twas pelts, and of to-day 'tis purple and gold
That cark men's lives with cares and weary with war.
Wherefore, methinks, resides the greater blame
With us vain men to-day: for cold would rack,
Without their pelts, the naked sons of earth;
But us it nothing hurts to do without
The purple vestment, broidered with gold
And with imposing figures, if we still
Make shift with some mean garment of the Plebs.
So man in vain futilities toils on

Forever and wastes in idle cares his years —
Because, of very truth, he hath not learnt
What the true end of getting is, nor yet
At all how far true pleasure may increase.
And 'tis desire for better and for more
Hath carried by degrees mortality
Out onward to the deep, and roused up
From the far bottom mighty waves of war.

But sun and moon, those watchmen of the world,
With their own lanterns traversing around
The mighty, the revolving vault, have taught
Unto mankind that seasons of the years
Return again, and that the Thing takes place
After a fixed plan and order fixed.

Already would they pass their life, hedged round
By the strong towers; and cultivate an earth
All portioned out and boundaried; already
Would the sea flower and sail-winged ships;
Already men had, under treaty pacts,
Confederates and allies, when poets began
To hand heroic actions down in verse;
Nor long ere this had letters been devised —
Hence is our age unable to look back
On what has gone before, except where reason
Shows us a footprint.

Sailings on the seas,
Tillings of fields, walls, laws, and arms, and roads,
Dress and the like, all prizes, all delights
Of finer life, poems, pictures, chiselled shapes
Of polished sculptures — all these arts were learned
By practice and the mind's experience,
As men walked forward step by eager step.
Thus time draws forward each and everything
Little by little into the midst of men,
And reason uplifts it to the shores of light.
For one thing after other did men see
Grow clear by intellect, till with their arts
They've now achieved the supreme pinnacle.

BOOK VI

PROEM

'Twas Athens first, the glorious in name,
That whilom gave to hapless sons of men
The sheaves of harvest, and re-ordered life,
And decreed laws; and she the first that gave
Life its sweet solaces, when she begat
A man of heart so wise, who whilom poured
All wisdom forth from his truth-speaking mouth;
The glory of whom, though dead, is yet to-day,
Because of those discoveries divine
Renowned of old, exalted to the sky.
For when saw he that well-nigh everything
Which needs of man most urgently require
Was ready to hand for mortals, and that life,
As far as might be, was established safe,
That men were lords in riches, honour, praise,
And eminent in goodly fame of sons,
And that they yet, O yet, within the home,
Still had the anxious heart which vexed life
Unpausingly with torments of the mind,
And raved perforce with angry complaints, then he,
Then he, the master, did perceive that 'twas
The vessel itself which worked the bane, and all,
However wholesome, which from here or there
Was gathered into it, was by that bane
Spoilt from within, — in part, because he saw
The vessel so cracked and leaky that nowise
'T could ever be filled to brim; in part because
He marked how it polluted with foul taste
Whate'er it got within itself. So he,
The master, then by his truth-speaking words,
Purged the breasts of men, and set the bounds
Of lust and terror, and exhibited
The supreme good whither we all endeavour,
And showed the path whereby we might arrive
Thereunto by a little cross-cut straight,
And what of ills in all affairs of mortals
Upsprang and flitted deviously about
(Whether by chance or force), since nature thus
Had destined; and from out what gates a man

Should sally to each combat. And he proved
That mostly vainly doth the human race
Roll in its bosom the grim waves of care.
For just as children tremble and fear all
In the viewless dark, so even we at times
Dread in the light so many things that be
No whit more fearsome than what children feign,
Shuddering, will be upon them in the dark.
This terror then, this darkness of the mind,
Not sunrise with its flaring spokes of light,
Nor glittering arrows of morning can disperse,
But only nature's aspect and her law.
Wherefore the more will I go on to weave
In verses this my undertaken task.

And since I've taught thee that the world's great vaults
Are mortal and that sky is fashioned
Of frame e'en born in time, and whatsoe'er
Therein go on and must perforce go on

The most I have unravelled; what remains
Do thou take in, besides; since once for all
To climb into that chariot' renowned

Of winds arise; and they appeased are
So that all things again...

Which were, are changed now, with fury stilled;
All other movements through the earth and sky
Which mortals gaze upon (O anxious oft
In quaking thoughts!), and which abase their minds
With dread of deities and press them crushed
Down to the earth, because their ignorance
Of cosmic causes forces them to yield
All things unto the empery of gods
And to concede the kingly rule to them.
For even those men who have learned full well
That godheads lead a long life free of care,
If yet meanwhile they wonder by what plan
Things can go on (and chiefly yon high things
Observed o'erhead on the ethereal coasts),
Again are hurried back unto the fears
Of old religion and adopt again
Harsh masters, deemed almighty, — wretched men,
Unwitting what can be and what cannot,

And by what law to each its scope prescribed,
Its boundary stone that clings so deep in Time.
Wherefore the more are they borne wandering on
By blindfold reason. And, Memmius, unless
From out thy mind thou spuest all of this
And castest far from thee all thoughts which be
Unworthy gods and alien to their peace,
Then often will the holy majesties
Of the high gods be harmful unto thee,
As by thy thought degraded, — not, indeed,
That essence supreme of gods could be by this
So outraged as in wrath to thirst to seek
Revenues keen; but even because thyself
Thou plaguest with the notion that the gods,
Even they, the Calm Ones in serene repose,
Do roll the mighty waves of wrath on wrath;
Nor wilt thou enter with a serene breast
Shrines of the gods; nor wilt thou able be
In tranquil peace of mind to take and know
Those images which from their holy bodies
Are carried into intellects of men,
As the announcers of their form divine.
What sort of life will follow after this
'Tis thine to see. But that afar from us
Veriest reason may drive such life away,
Much yet remains to be embellished yet
In polished verses, albeit hath issued forth
So much from me already; lo, there is
The law and aspect of the sky to be
By reason grasped; there are the tempest times
And the bright lightnings to be hymned now —
Even what they do and from what cause soe'er
They're borne along — that thou mayst tremble not,
Marking off regions of prophetic skies
For auguries, O foolishly distraught
Even as to whence the flying flame hath come,
Or to which half of heaven it turns, or how
Through walled places it hath wound its way,
Or, after proving its dominion there,
How it hath speeded forth from thence amain —
Whereof nowise the causes do men know,
And think divinities are working there.
Do thou, Calliope, ingenious Muse,
Solace of mortals and delight of gods,

Point out the course before me, as I race
On to the white line of the utmost goal,
That I may get with signal praise the crown,
With thee my guide!

GREAT METEOROLOGICAL PHENOMENA, ETC.

And so in first place, then,
With thunder are shaken the blue deeps of heaven,
Because the ethereal clouds, scudding aloft,
Together clash, what time 'gainst one another
The winds are battling. For never a sound there comes
From out the serene regions of the sky;
But wheresoever in a host more dense
The clouds foregather, thence more often comes
A crash with mighty rumbling. And, again,
Clouds cannot be of so condensed a frame
As stones and timbers, nor again so fine
As mists and flying smoke; for then perforce
They'd either fall, borne down by their brute weight,
Like stones, or, like the smoke, they'd powerless be
To keep their mass, or to retain within
Frore snows and storms of hail. And they give forth
O'er skiey levels of the spreading world
A sound on high, as linen-awning, stretched
O'er mighty theatres, gives forth at times
A cracking roar, when much 'tis beaten about
Betwixt the poles and cross-beams. Sometimes, too,
Asunder rent by wanton gusts, it raves
And imitates the tearing sound of sheets
Of paper — even this kind of noise thou mayst
In thunder hear — or sound as when winds whirl
With lashings and do buffet about in air
A hanging cloth and flying paper-sheets.
For sometimes, too, it chanches that the clouds
Cannot together crash head-on, but rather
Move side-wise and with motions contrary
Graze each the other's body without speed,
From whence that dry sound grateth on our ears,
So long drawn-out, until the clouds have passed
From out their close positions.

And, again,
In following wise all things seem oft to quake
At shock of heavy thunder, and mightiest walls

Of the wide reaches of the upper world
There on the instant to have sprung apart,
Riven asunder, what time a gathered blast
Of the fierce hurricane hath all at once
Twisted its way into a mass of clouds,
And, there enclosed, ever more and more
Compelleth by its spinning whirl the cloud
To grow all hollow with a thickened crust
Surrounding; for thereafter, when the force
And the keen onset of the wind have weakened
That crust, lo, then the cloud, to-split in twain,
Gives forth a hideous crash with bang and boom.
No marvel this; since oft a bladder small,
Filled up with air, will, when of sudden burst,
Give forth a like large sound.

There's reason, too,
Why clouds make sounds, as through them blow the winds:
We see, borne down the sky, oft shapes of clouds
Rough-edged or branched many forky ways;
And 'tis the same, as when the sudden flaws
Of north-west wind through the dense forest blow,
Making the leaves to sough and limbs to crash.
It happens too at times that roused force
Of the fierce hurricane to-rends the cloud,
Breaking right through it by a front assault;
For what a blast of wind may do up there
Is manifest from facts when here on earth
A blast more gentle yet uptwists tall trees
And sucks them madly from their deepest roots.
Besides, among the clouds are waves, and these
Give, as they roughly break, a rumbling roar;
As when along deep streams or the great sea
Breaks the loud surf. It happens, too, whenever
Out from one cloud into another falls
The fiery energy of thunderbolt,
That straightaway the cloud, if full of wet,
Extinguishes the fire with mighty noise;
As iron, white from the hot furnaces,
Sizzles, when speedily we've plunged its glow
Down the cold water. Further, if a cloud
More dry receive the fire, 'twill suddenly
Kindle to flame and burn with monstrous sound,
As if a flame with whirl of winds should range

Along the laurel-tressed mountains far,
Upburning with its vast assault those trees;
Nor is there aught that in the crackling flame
Consumes with sound more terrible to man
Than Delphic laurel of Apollo lord.
Oft, too, the multitudinous crash of ice
And down-pour of swift hail gives forth a sound
Among the mighty clouds on high; for when
The wind hath packed them close, each mountain mass
Of rain-cloud, there congealed utterly
And mixed with hail-stones, breaks and booms...

Likewise, it lightens, when the clouds have struck,
By their collision, forth the seeds of fire:
As if a stone should smite a stone or steel,
For light then too leaps forth and fire then scatters
The shining sparks. But with our ears we get
The thunder after eyes behold the flash,
Because forever things arrive the ears
More tardily than the eyes — as thou mayst see
From this example too: when markest thou
Some man far yonder felling a great tree
With double-edged ax, it comes to pass
Thine eye beholds the swinging stroke before
The blow gives forth a sound athrough thine ears:
Thus also we behold the flashing ere
We hear the thunder, which discharged is
At same time with the fire and by same cause,
Born of the same collision.

In following wise

The clouds suffuse with leaping light the lands,
And the storm flashes with tremulous elan:
When the wind hath invaded a cloud, and, whirling there,
Hath wrought (as I have shown above) the cloud
Into a hollow with a thickened crust,
It becomes hot of own velocity:
Just as thou seest how motion will o'erheat
And set ablaze all objects, — verily
A leaden ball, hurtling through length of space,
Even melts. Therefore, when this same wind a-fire
Hath split black cloud, it scatters the fire-seeds,
Which, so to say, have been pressed out by force
Of sudden from the cloud; — and these do make
The pulsing flashes of flame; thence followeth

The detonation which attacks our ears
More tardily than aught which comes along
Unto the sight of eyeballs. This takes place —
As know thou mayst — at times when clouds are dense
And one upon the other piled aloft
With wonderful upheavings — nor be thou
Deceived because we see how broad their base
From underneath, and not how high they tower.
For make thine observations at a time
When winds shall bear athwart the horizon's blue
Clouds like to mountain-ranges moving on,
Or when about the sides of mighty peaks
Thou seest them one upon the other massed
And burdening downward, anchored in high repose,
With the winds sepulchred on all sides round:
Then canst thou know their mighty masses, then
Canst view their caverns, as if builded there
Of beetling crags; which, when the hurricanes
In gathered storm have filled utterly,
Then, prisoned in clouds, they rave around
With mighty roarings, and within those dens
Bluster like savage beasts, and now from here,
And now from there, send growlings through the clouds,
And seeking an outlet, whirl themselves about,
And roll from 'mid the clouds the seeds of fire,
And heap them multitudinously there,
And in the hollow furnaces within
Wheel flame around, until from bursted cloud
In forked flashes they have gleamed forth.

Again, from following cause it comes to pass
That yon swift golden hue of liquid fire
Darts downward to the earth: because the clouds
Themselves must hold abundant seeds of fire;
For, when they be without all moisture, then
They be for most part of a flamy hue
And a resplendent. And, indeed, they must
Even from the light of sun unto themselves
Take multitudinous seeds, and so perforce
Redden and pour their bright fires all abroad.
And therefore, when the wind hath driven and thrust,
Hath forced and squeezed into one spot these clouds,
They pour abroad the seeds of fire pressed out,
Which make to flash these colours of the flame.

Likewise, it lightens also when the clouds
Grow rare and thin along the sky; for, when
The wind with gentle touch unravels them
And breaketh asunder as they move, those seeds
Which make the lightnings must by nature fall;
At such an hour the horizon lightens round
Without the hideous terror of dread noise
And skiey uproar.

To proceed apace,
What sort of nature thunderbolts possess
Is by their strokes made manifest and by
The brand-marks of their searing heat on things,
And by the scorched scars exhaling round
The heavy fumes of sulphur. For all these
Are marks, O not of wind or rain, but fire.
Again, they often enkindle even the roofs
Of houses and inside the very rooms
With swift flame hold a fierce dominion.
Know thou that nature fashioned this fire
Subtler than fires all other, with minute
And dartling bodies, — a fire 'gainst which there's naught
Can in the least hold out: the thunderbolt,
The mighty, passes through the hedging walls
Of houses, like to voices or a shout, —
Through stones, through bronze it passes, and it melts
Upon the instant bronze and gold; and makes,
Likewise, the wines sudden to vanish forth,
The wine-jars intact, — because, ye see,
Its heat arriving renders loose and porous
Readily all the wine — jar's earthen sides,
And winding its way within, it scattereth
The elements primordial of the wine
With speedy dissolution — process which
Even in an age the fiery steam of sun
Could not accomplish, however puissant he
With his hot coruscations: so much more
Agile and overpowering is this force.

Now in what manner engendered are these things,
How fashioned of such impetuous strength
As to cleave towers asunder, and houses all
To overtopple, and to wrench apart
Timbers and beams, and heroes' monuments
To pile in ruins and upheave amain,

And to take breath forever out of men,
And to o'erthrow the cattle everywhere, —
Yes, by what force the lightnings do all this,
All this and more, I will unfold to thee,
Nor longer keep thee in mere promises.

The bolts of thunder, then, must be conceived
As all begotten in those crasser clouds
Up-piled aloft; for, from the sky serene
And from the clouds of lighter density,
None are sent forth forever. That 'tis so
Beyond a doubt, fact plain to sense declares:
To wit, at such a time the denser clouds
So mass themselves through all the upper air
That we might think that round about all murk
Had parted forth from Acheron and filled
The mighty vaults of sky — so grievously,
As gathers thus the storm-clouds' gruesome might,
Do faces of black horror hang on high —
When tempest begins its thunderbolts to forge.
Besides, full often also out at sea
A blackest thunderhead, like cataract
Of pitch hurled down from heaven, and far away
Bulging with murkiness, down on the waves
Falls with vast uproar, and draws on amain
The darkling tempests big with thunderbolts
And hurricanes, itself the while so crammed
Tremendously with fires and winds, that even
Back on the lands the people shudder round
And seek for cover. Therefore, as I said,
The storm must be conceived as o'er our head
Towering most high; for never would the clouds
O'erwhelm the lands with such a massy dark,
Unless up-built heap on lofty heap,
To shut the round sun off. Nor could the clouds,
As on they come, engulf with rain so vast
As thus to make the rivers overflow
And fields to float, if ether were not thus
Furnished with lofty-piled clouds. Lo, then,
Here be all things fulfilled with winds and fires —
Hence the long lightnings and the thunders loud.
For, verily, I've taught thee even now
How cavernous clouds hold seeds innumerable
Of fiery exhalations, and they must

From off the sunbeams and the heat of these
Take many still. And so, when that same wind
(Which, haply, into one region of the sky
Collects those clouds) hath pressed from out the same
The many fiery seeds, and with that fire
Hath at the same time inter-mixed itself,
O then and there that wind, a whirlwind now,
Deep in the belly of the cloud spins round
In narrow confines, and sharpens there inside
In glowing furnaces the thunderbolt.
For in a two-fold manner is that wind
Enkindled all: it trembles into heat
Both by its own velocity and by
Repeated touch of fire. Thereafter, when
The energy of wind is heated through
And the fierce impulse of the fire hath sped
Deeply within, O then the thunderbolt,
Now ripened, so to say, doth suddenly
Splinter the cloud, and the aroused flash
Leaps onward, lumining with forky light
All places round. And followeth anon
A clap so heavy that the skiey vaults,
As if asunder burst, seem from on high
To engulf the earth. Then fearfully a quake
Pervades the lands, and 'long the lofty skies
Run the far rumblings. For at such a time
Nigh the whole tempest quakes, shook through and through,
And roused are the roarings, — from which shock
Comes such resounding and abounding rain,
That all the murky ether seems to turn
Now into rain, and, as it tumbles down,
To summon the fields back to primeval floods:
So big the rains that be sent down on men
By burst of cloud and by the hurricane,
What time the thunder-clap, from burning bolt
That cracks the cloud, flies forth along. At times
The force of wind, excited from without,
Smiteth into a cloud already hot
With a ripe thunderbolt. And when that wind
Hath splintered that cloud, then down there cleaves forthwith
Yon fiery coil of flame which still we call,
Even with our fathers' word, a thunderbolt.
The same thing haps toward every other side
Whither that force hath swept. It happens, too,

That sometimes force of wind, though hurtled forth
Without all fire, yet in its voyage through space
Igniteth, whilst it comes along, along, —
Losing some larger bodies which cannot
Pass, like the others, through the bulks of air, —
And, scraping together out of air itself
Some smaller bodies, carries them along,
And these, commingling, by their flight make fire:
Much in the manner as oft a leaden ball
Grows hot upon its aery course, the while
It loseth many bodies of stark cold
And taketh into itself along the air
New particles of fire. It happens, too,
That force of blow itself arouses fire,
When force of wind, a-cold and hurtled forth
Without all fire, hath strook somewhere amain —
No marvel, because, when with terrific stroke
‘Thas smitten, the elements of fiery-stuff
Can stream together from out the very wind
And, simultaneously, from out that thing
Which then and there receives the stroke: as flies
The fire when with the steel we hack the stone;
Nor yet, because the force of steel’s a-cold,
Rush the less speedily together there
Under the stroke its seeds of radiance hot.
And therefore, thuswise must an object too
Be kindled by a thunderbolt, if haply
‘Thas been adapt and suited to the flames.
Yet force of wind must not be rashly deemed
As altogether and entirely cold —
That force which is discharged from on high
With such stupendous power; but if ’tis not
Upon its course already kindled with fire,
It yet arriveth warmed and mixed with heat.

And, now, the speed and stroke of thunderbolt
Is so tremendous, and with glide so swift
Those thunderbolts rush on and down, because
Their roused force itself collects itself
First always in the clouds, and then prepares
For the huge effort of their going-forth;
Next, when the cloud no longer can retain
The increment of their fierce impetus,
Their force is pressed out, and therefore flies

With impetus so wondrous, like to shots
Hurl'd from the powerful Roman catapults.
Note, too, this force consists of elements
Both small and smooth, nor is there aught that can
With ease resist such nature. For it darts
Between and enters through the pores of things;
And so it never falters in delay
Despite innumerable collisions, but
Flies shooting onward with a swift elan.
Next, since by nature always every weight
Bears downward, doubled is the swiftness then
And that elan is still more wild and dread,
When, verily, to weight are added blows,
So that more madly and more fiercely then
The thunderbolt shakes into shivers all
That blocks its path, following on its way.
Then, too, because it comes along, along
With one continuing elan, it must
Take on velocity anew, anew,
Which still increases as it goes, and ever
Augments the bolt's vast powers and to the blow
Gives larger vigour; for it forces all,
All of the thunder's seeds of fire, to sweep
In a straight line unto one place, as 'twere, —
Casting them one by other, as they roll,
Into that onward course. Again, perchance,
In coming along, it pulls from out the air
Some certain bodies, which by their own blows
Enkindle its velocity. And, lo,
It comes through objects leaving them unharmed,
It goes through many things and leaves them whole,
Because the liquid fire flieth along
Athrough their pores. And much it does transfix,
When these primordial atoms of the bolt
Have fallen upon the atoms of these things
Precisely where the intertwined atoms
Are held together. And, further, easily
Brass it unbinds and quickly fuseth gold,
Because its force is so minutely made
Of tiny parts and elements so smooth
That easily they wind their way within,
And, when once in, quickly unbind all knots
And loosen all the bonds of union there.

And most in autumn is shaken the house of heaven,
The house so studded with the glittering stars,
And the whole earth around — most too in spring
When flowery times unfold themselves: for, lo,
In the cold season is there lack of fire,
And winds are scanty in the hot, and clouds
Have not so dense a bulk. But when, indeed,
The seasons of heaven are betwixt these twain,
The divers causes of the thunderbolt
Then all concur; for then both cold and heat
Are mixed in the cross-seas of the year,
So that a discord rises among things
And air in vast tumultuosity
Billows, infuriate with the fires and winds —
Of which the both are needed by the cloud
For fabrication of the thunderbolt.
For the first part of heat and last of cold
Is the time of spring; wherefore must things unlike
Do battle one with other, and, when mixed,
Tumultuously rage. And when rolls round
The latest heat mixed with the earliest chill —
The time which bears the name of autumn — then
Likewise fierce cold-spells wrestle with fierce heats.
On this account these seasons of the year
Are nominated “cross-seas.” — And no marvel
If in those times the thunderbolts prevail
And storms are roused turbulent in heaven,
Since then both sides in dubious warfare rage
Tumultuously, the one with flames, the other
With winds and with waters mixed with winds.

This, this it is, O Memmius, to see through
The very nature of fire-fraught thunderbolt;
O this it is to mark by what blind force
It maketh each effect, and not, O not
To unwind Etrurian scrolls oracular,
Inquiring tokens of occult will of gods,
Even as to whence the flying flame hath come,
Or to which half of heaven it turns, or how
Through walled places it hath wound its way,
Or, after proving its dominion there,
How it hath speeded forth from thence amain,
Or what the thunderstroke portends of ill
From out high heaven. But if Jupiter

And other gods shake those refulgent vaults
With dread reverberations and hurl fire
Whither it pleases each, why smite they not
Mortals of reckless and revolting crimes,
That such may pant from a transpierced breast
Forth flames of the red levin — unto men
A drastic lesson? — why is rather he —
O he self-conscious of no foul offence —
Involved in flames, though innocent, and clasped
Up-caught in skiey whirlwind and in fire?
Nay, why, then, aim they at eternal wastes,
And spend themselves in vain? — perchance, even so
To exercise their arms and strengthen shoulders?
Why suffer they the Father's javelin
To be so blunted on the earth? And why
Doth he himself allow it, nor spare the same
Even for his enemies? O why most oft
Aims he at lofty places? Why behold we
Marks of his lightnings most on mountain tops?
Then for what reason shoots he at the sea? —
What sacrilege have waves and bulk of brine
And floating fields of foam been guilty of?
Besides, if 'tis his will that we beware
Against the lightning-stroke, why feareth he
To grant us power for to behold the shot?
And, contrariwise, if wills he to o'erwhelm us,
Quite off our guard, with fire, why thunders he
Off in yon quarter, so that we may shun?
Why rouseth he beforehand darkling air
And the far din and rumblings? And O how
Canst thou believe he shoots at one same time
Into diverse directions? Or dardest thou
Contend that never hath it come to pass
That divers strokes have happened at one time?
But oft and often hath it come to pass,
And often still it must, that, even as showers
And rains o'er many regions fall, so too
Dart many thunderbolts at one same time.
Again, why never hurtles Jupiter
A bolt upon the lands nor pours abroad
Clap upon clap, when skies are cloudless all?
Or, say, doth he, so soon as ever the clouds
Have come thereunder, then into the same
Descend in person, that from thence he may

Near-by decide upon the stroke of shaft?
And, lastly, why, with devastating bolt
Shakes he asunder holy shrines of gods
And his own thrones of splendour, and to-breaks
The well-wrought idols of divinities,
And robs of glory his own images
By wound of violence?

But to return apace,
Easy it is from these same facts to know
In just what wise those things (which from their sort
The Greeks have named “bellows”) do come down,
Discharged from on high, upon the seas.
For it haps that sometimes from the sky descends
Upon the seas a column, as if pushed,
Round which the surges seethe, tremendously
Aroused by puffing gusts; and whatso'er
Of ships are caught within that tumult then
Come into extreme peril, dashed along.
This haps when sometimes wind's aroused force
Can't burst the cloud it tries to, but down-weighs
That cloud, until 'tis like a column from sky
Upon the seas pushed downward — gradually,
As if a Somewhat from on high were shoved
By fist and nether thrust of arm, and lengthened
Far to the waves. And when the force of wind
Hath rived this cloud, from out the cloud it rushes
Down on the seas, and starts among the waves
A wondrous seething, for the eddying whirl
Descends and downward draws along with it
That cloud of ductile body. And soon as ever
'Thas shoved unto the levels of the main
That laden cloud, the whirl suddenly then
Plunges its whole self into the waters there
And rouses all the sea with monstrous roar,
Constraining it to seethe. It happens too
That very vortex of the wind involves
Itself in clouds, scraping from out the air
The seeds of cloud, and counterfeits, as 'twere,
The “bellows” pushed from heaven. And when this shape
Hath dropped upon the lands and burst apart,
It belches forth immeasurable might
Of whirlwind and of blast. Yet since 'tis formed
At most but rarely, and on land the hills

Must block its way, 'tis seen more oft out there
On the broad prospect of the level main
Along the free horizons.

Into being

The clouds condense, when in this upper space
Of the high heaven have gathered suddenly,
As round they flew, unnumbered particles —
World's rougher ones, which can, though interlinked
With scanty couplings, yet be fastened firm,
The one on other caught. These particles
First cause small clouds to form; and, thereupon,
These catch the one on other and swarm in a flock
And grow by their conjoining, and by winds
Are borne along, along, until collects
The tempest fury. Happens, too, the nearer
The mountain summits neighbour to the sky,
The more unceasingly their far crags smoke
With the thick darkness of swart cloud, because
When first the mists do form, ere ever the eyes
Can there behold them (tenuous as they be),
The carrier-winds will drive them up and on
Unto the topmost summits of the mountain;
And then at last it happens, when they be
In vaster throng upgathered, that they can
By this very condensation lie revealed,
And that at same time they are seen to surge
From very vertex of the mountain up
Into far ether. For very fact and feeling,
As we up-climb high mountains, proveth clear
That windy are those upward regions free.
Besides, the clothes hung-out along the shore,
When in they take the clinging moisture, prove
That nature lifts from over all the sea
Unnumbered particles. Whereby the more
'Tis manifest that many particles
Even from the salt upheavings of the main
Can rise together to augment the bulk
Of massed clouds. For moistures in these twain
Are near akin. Besides, from out all rivers,
As well as from the land itself, we see
Up-rising mists and steam, which like a breath
Are forced out from them and borne aloft,
To curtain heaven with their murk, and make,

By slow foregathering, the skiey clouds.
For, in addition, lo, the heat on high
Of constellated ether burdens down
Upon them, and by sort of condensation
Weaveth beneath the azure firmament
The reek of darkling cloud. It happens, too,
That hither to the skies from the Beyond
Do come those particles which make the clouds
And flying thunderheads. For I have taught
That this their number is innumerable
And infinite the sum of the Abyss,
And I have shown with what stupendous speed
Those bodies fly and how they're wont to pass
Amain through incommunicable space.
Therefore, 'tis not exceeding strange, if oft
In little time tempest and darkness cover
With bulking thunderheads hanging on high
The oceans and the lands, since everywhere
Through all the narrow tubes of yonder ether,
Yea, so to speak, through all the breathing-holes
Of the great upper-world encompassing,
There be for the primordial elements
Exits and entrances.

Now come, and how
The rainy moisture thickens into being
In the lofty clouds, and how upon the lands
'Tis then discharged in down-pour of large showers,
I will unfold. And first triumphantly
Will I persuade thee that up-rise together,
With clouds themselves, full many seeds of water
From out all things, and that they both increase —
Both clouds and water which is in the clouds —
In like proportion, as our frames increase
In like proportion with our blood, as well
As sweat or any moisture in our members.
Besides, the clouds take in from time to time
Much moisture risen from the broad marine, —
Whilst the winds bear them o'er the mighty sea,
Like hanging fleeces of white wool. Thuswise,
Even from all rivers is there lifted up
Moisture into the clouds. And when therein
The seeds of water so many in many ways
Have come together, augmented from all sides,

The close-jammed clouds then struggle to discharge
Their rain-storms for a two-fold reason: lo,
The wind's force crowds them, and the very excess
Of storm-clouds (massed in a vaster throng)
Giveth an urge and pressure from above
And makes the rains out-pour. Besides when, too,
The clouds are winnowed by the winds, or scattered
Smitten on top by heat of sun, they send
Their rainy moisture, and distil their drops,
Even as the wax, by fiery warmth on top,
Wasteth and liquefies abundantly.
But comes the violence of the bigger rains
When violently the clouds are weighted down
Both by their cumulated mass and by
The onset of the wind. And rains are wont
To endure awhile and to abide for long,
When many seeds of waters are aroused,
And clouds on clouds and racks on racks outstream
In piled layers and are borne along
From every quarter, and when all the earth
Smoking exhales her moisture. At such a time
When sun with beams amid the tempest-murk
Hath shone against the showers of black rains,
Then in the swart clouds there emerges bright
The radiance of the bow.

And as to things
Not mentioned here which of themselves do grow
Or of themselves are gendered, and all things
Which in the clouds condense to being — all,
Snow and the winds, hail and the hoar-frosts chill,
And freezing, mighty force — of lakes and pools
The mighty hardener, and mighty check
Which in the winter curbeth everywhere
The rivers as they go— 'tis easy still,
Soon to discover and with mind to see
How they all happen, whereby gendered,
When once thou well hast understood just what
Functions have been vouchsafed from of old
Unto the procreant atoms of the world.
Now come, and what the law of earthquakes is
Hearken, and first of all take care to know
That the under-earth, like to the earth around us,
Is full of windy caverns all about;

And many a pool and many a grim abyss
She bears within her bosom, ay, and cliffs
And jagged scarps; and many a river, hid
Beneath her chine, rolls rapidly along
Its billows and plunging boulders. For clear fact
Requires that earth must be in every part
Alike in constitution. Therefore, earth,
With these things underneath affixed and set,
Trembleth above, jarred by big down-tumblings,
When time hath undermined the huge caves,
The subterranean. Yea, whole mountains fall,
And instantly from spot of that big jar
There quiver the tremors far and wide abroad.
And with good reason: since houses on the street
Begin to quake throughout, when jarred by a cart
Of no large weight; and, too, the furniture
Within the house up-bounds, when a paving-block
Gives either iron rim of the wheels a jolt.
It happens, too, when some prodigious bulk
Of age-worn soil is rolled from mountain slopes
Into tremendous pools of water dark,
That the reeling land itself is rocked about
By the water's undulations; as a basin
Sometimes won't come to rest until the fluid
Within it ceases to be rocked about
In random undulations.

And besides,
When subterranean winds, up-gathered there
In the hollow deeps, bulk forward from one spot,
And press with the big urge of mighty powers
Against the lofty grottos, then the earth
Bulks to that quarter whither push amain
The headlong winds. Then all the builded houses
Above ground — and the more, the higher up-reared
Unto the sky — lean ominously, careening
Into the same direction; and the beams,
Wrenched forward, over-hang, ready to go.
Yet dread men to believe that there awaits
The nature of the mighty world a time
Of doom and cataclysm, albeit they see
So great a bulk of lands to bulge and break!
And lest the winds blew back again, no force
Could rein things in nor hold from sure career

On to disaster. But now because those winds
Blow back and forth in alternation strong,
And, so to say, rallying charge again,
And then repulsed retreat, on this account
Earth oftener threatens than she brings to pass
Collapses dire. For to one side she leans,
Then back she sways; and after tottering
Forward, recovers then her seats of poise.
Thus, this is why whole houses rock, the roofs
More than the middle stories, middle more
Than lowest, and the lowest least of all.

Arises, too, this same great earth-quaking,
When wind and some prodigious force of air,
Collected from without or down within
The old telluric deeps, have hurled themselves
Amain into those caverns sub-terrene,
And there at first tumultuously chafe
Among the vasty grottos, borne about
In mad rotations, till their lashed force
Aroused out-bursts abroad, and then and there,
Riving the deep earth, makes a mighty chasm —
What once in Syrian Sidon did befall,
And once in Peloponnesian Aegium,
Twain cities which such out-break of wild air
And earth's convulsion, following hard upon,
O'erthrew of old. And many a walled town,
Besides, hath fall'n by such omnipotent
Convulsions on the land, and in the sea
Engulfed hath sunken many a city down
With all its populace. But if, indeed,
They burst not forth, yet is the very rush
Of the wild air and fury-force of wind
Then dissipated, like an ague-fit,
Through the innumerable pores of earth,
To set her all a-shake — even as a chill,
When it hath gone into our marrow-bones,
Sets us convulsively, despite ourselves,
A-shivering and a-shaking. Therefore, men
With two-fold terror bustle in alarm
Through cities to and fro: they fear the roofs
Above the head; and underfoot they dread
The caverns, lest the nature of the earth
Suddenly rend them open, and she gape,

Herself asunder, with tremendous maw,
And, all confounded, seek to chock it full
With her own ruins. Let men, then, go on
Feigning at will that heaven and earth shall be
Inviolable, entrusted evermore
To an eternal weal: and yet at times
The very force of danger here at hand
Prods them on some side with this goad of fear —
This among others — that the earth, withdrawn
Abruptly from under their feet, be hurried down,
Down into the abyss, and the Sum-of-Things
Be following after, utterly fordone,
Till be but wrack and wreckage of a world.

EXTRAORDINARY AND PARADOXICAL TELLURIC PHENOMENA

In chief, men marvel nature renders not
Bigger and bigger the bulk of ocean, since
So vast the down-rush of the waters be,
And every river out of every realm
Cometh thereto; and add the random rains
And flying tempests, which spatter every sea
And every land bedew; add their own springs:
Yet all of these unto the ocean's sum
Shall be but as the increase of a drop.
Wherefore 'tis less a marvel that the sea,
The mighty ocean, increaseth not. Besides,
Sun with his heat draws off a mighty part:
Yea, we behold that sun with burning beams
To dry our garments dripping all with wet;
And many a sea, and far out-spread beneath,
Do we behold. Therefore, however slight
The portion of wet that sun on any spot
Culls from the level main, he still will take
From off the waves in such a wide expanse
Abundantly. Then, further, also winds,
Sweeping the level waters, can bear off
A mighty part of wet, since we behold
Oft in a single night the highways dried
By winds, and soft mud crusted o'er at dawn.
Again, I've taught thee that the clouds bear off
Much moisture too, up-taken from the reaches
Of the mighty main, and sprinkle it about
O'er all the zones, when rain is on the lands

And winds convey the aery racks of vapour.
Lastly, since earth is porous through her frame,
And neighbours on the seas, girdling their shores,
The water's wet must seep into the lands
From briny ocean, as from lands it comes
Into the seas. For brine is filtered off,
And then the liquid stuff seeps back again
And all re-poureth at the river-heads,
Whence in fresh-water currents it returns
Over the lands, adown the channels which
Were cleft erstwhile and erstwhile bore along
The liquid-footed floods.

And now the cause
Whereby athrough the throat of Aetna's Mount
Such vast tornado-fires out-breathe at times,
I will unfold: for with no middling might
Of devastation the flamy tempest rose
And held dominion in Sicilian fields:
Drawing upon itself the upturned faces
Of neighbouring clans, what time they saw afar
The skiey vaults a-fume and sparkling all,
And filled their bosoms with dread anxiety
Of what new thing nature were travailing at.

In these affairs it much behooveth thee
To look both wide and deep, and far abroad
To peer to every quarter, that thou mayst
Remember how boundless is the Sum-of-Things,
And mark how infinitely small a part
Of the whole Sum is this one sky of ours —
O not so large a part as is one man
Of the whole earth. And plainly if thou viewest
This cosmic fact, placing it square in front,
And plainly understandest, thou wilt leave
Wondering at many things. For who of us
Wondereth if some one gets into his joints
A fever, gathering head with fiery heat,
Or any other dolorous disease
Along his members? For anon the foot
Grows blue and bulbous; often the sharp twinge
Seizes the teeth, attacks the very eyes;
Out-breaks the sacred fire, and, crawling on
Over the body, burneth every part
It seizeth on, and works its hideous way

Along the frame. No marvel this, since, lo,
Of things innumerable be seeds enough,
And this our earth and sky do bring to us
Enough of bane from whence can grow the strength
Of maladies uncounted. Thuswise, then,
We must suppose to all the sky and earth
Are ever supplied from out the infinite
All things, O all in stores enough whereby
The shaken earth can of a sudden move,
And fierce typhoons can over sea and lands
Go tearing on, and Aetna's fires o'erflow,
And heaven become a flame-burst. For that, too,
Happens at times, and the celestial vaults
Glow into fire, and rainy tempests rise
In heavier congregation, when, percase,
The seeds of water have foregathered thus
From out the infinite. "Aye, but passing huge
The fiery turmoil of that conflagration!"
So sayst thou; well, huge many a river seems
To him that erstwhile ne'er a larger saw;
Thus, huge seems tree or man; and everything
Which mortal sees the biggest of each class,
That he imagines to be "huge"; though yet
All these, with sky and land and sea to boot,
Are all as nothing to the sum entire
Of the all-Sum.

But now I will unfold
At last how yonder suddenly angered flame
Out-blows abroad from vasty furnaces
Aetnaean. First, the mountain's nature is
All under-hollow, propped about, about
With caverns of basaltic piers. And, lo,
In all its grottos be there wind and air —
For wind is made when air hath been uproused
By violent agitation. When this air
Is heated through and through, and, raging round,
Hath made the earth and all the rocks it touches
Horribly hot, and hath struck off from them
Fierce fire of swiftest flame, it lifts itself
And hurtles thus straight upwards through its throat
Into high heav'n, and thus bears on afar
Its burning blasts and scattereth afar
Its ashes, and rolls a smoke of pitchy murk

And heaveth the while boulders of wondrous weight —
Leaving no doubt in thee that 'tis the air's
Tumultuous power. Besides, in mighty part,
The sea there at the roots of that same mount
Breaks its old billows and sucks back its surf.
And grottos from the sea pass in below
Even to the bottom of the mountain's throat.
Herethrough thou must admit there go...

And the conditions force [the water and air]
Deeply to penetrate from the open sea,
And to out-blow abroad, and to up-bear
Thereby the flame, and to up-cast from deeps
The boulders, and to rear the clouds of sand.
For at the top be "bowls," as people there
Are wont to name what we at Rome do call
The throats and mouths.

There be, besides, some thing
Of which 'tis not enough one only cause
To state — but rather several, whereof one
Will be the true: lo, if thou shouldst espy
Lying afar some fellow's lifeless corse,
'Twere meet to name all causes of a death,
That cause of his death might thereby be named:
For prove thou mayst he perished not by steel,
By cold, nor even by poison nor disease,
Yet somewhat of this sort hath come to him
We know — And thus we have to say the same
In divers cases.

Toward the summer, Nile
Waxeth and overfloweth the champaign,
Unique in all the landscape, river sole
Of the Aegyptians. In mid-season heats
Often and oft he waters Aegypt o'er,
Either because in summer against his mouths
Come those northwinds which at that time of year
Men name the Etesian blasts, and, blowing thus
Upstream, retard, and, forcing back his waves,
Fill him o'erfull and force his flow to stop.
For out of doubt these blasts which driven be
From icy constellations of the pole
Are borne straight up the river. Comes that river
From forth the sultry places down the south,

Rising far up in midmost realm of day,
Among black generations of strong men
With sun-baked skins. 'Tis possible, besides,
That a big bulk of piled sand may bar
His mouths against his onward waves, when sea,
Wild in the winds, tumbles the sand to inland;
Whereby the river's outlet were less free,
Likewise less headlong his descending floods.
It may be, too, that in this season rains
Are more abundant at its fountain head,
Because the Etesian blasts of those northwinds
Then urge all clouds into those inland parts.
And, soothly, when they're thus foregathered there,
Urged yonder into midmost realm of day,
Then, crowded against the lofty mountain sides,
They're massed and powerfully pressed. Again,
Perchance, his waters wax, O far away,
Among the Aethiopians' lofty mountains,
When the all-beholding sun with thawing beams
Drives the white snows to flow into the vales.

Now come; and unto thee I will unfold,
As to the Birdless spots and Birdless tarns,
What sort of nature they are furnished with.
First, as to name of "birdless," — that derives
From very fact, because they noxious be
Unto all birds. For when above those spots
In horizontal flight the birds have come,
Forgetting to oar with wings, they furl their sails,
And, with down-drooping of their delicate necks,
Fall headlong into earth, if haply such
The nature of the spots, or into water,
If haply spreads thereunder Birdless tarn.
Such spot's at Cumae, where the mountains smoke,
Charged with the pungent sulphur, and increased
With steaming springs. And such a spot there is
Within the walls of Athens, even there
On summit of Acropolis, beside
Fane of Tritonian Pallas bountiful,
Where never cawing crows can wing their course,
Not even when smoke the altars with good gifts, —
But evermore they flee — yet not from wrath
Of Pallas, grieved at that espial old,
As poets of the Greeks have sung the tale;

But very nature of the place compels.
In Syria also — as men say — a spot
Is to be seen, where also four-foot kinds,
As soon as ever they've set their steps within,
Collapse, o'ercome by its essential power,
As if there slaughtered to the under-gods.
Lo, all these wonders work by natural law,
And from what causes they are brought to pass
The origin is manifest; so, haply,
Let none believe that in these regions stands
The gate of Orcus, nor us then suppose,
Haply, that thence the under-gods draw down
Souls to dark shores of Acheron — as stags,
The wing-footed, are thought to draw to light,
By sniffing nostrils, from their dusky lairs
The wriggling generations of wild snakes.
How far removed from true reason is this,
Perceive thou straight; for now I'll try to say
Somewhat about the very fact.

And, first,
This do I say, as oft I've said before:
In earth are atoms of things of every sort;
And know, these all thus rise from out the earth —
Many life-giving which be good for food,
And many which can generate disease
And hasten death, O many primal seeds
Of many things in many modes — since earth
Contains them mingled and gives forth discrete.
And we have shown before that certain things
Be unto certain creatures suited more
For ends of life, by virtue of a nature,
A texture, and primordial shapes, unlike
For kinds alike. Then too 'tis thine to see
How many things oppressive be and foul
To man, and to sensation most malign:
Many meander miserably through ears;
Many in-wind athrough the nostrils too,
Malign and harsh when mortal draws a breath;
Of not a few must one avoid the touch;
Of not a few must one escape the sight;
And some there be all loathsome to the taste;
And many, besides, relax the languid limbs
Along the frame, and undermine the soul

In its abodes within. To certain trees
There hath been given so dolorous a shade
That often they gender achings of the head,
If one but be beneath, outstretched on the sward.
There is, again, on Helicon's high hills
A tree that's wont to kill a man outright
By fetid odour of its very flower.
And when the pungent stench of the night-lamp,
Extinguished but a moment since, assails
The nostrils, then and there it puts to sleep
A man afflicted with the falling sickness
And foamings at the mouth. A woman, too,
At the heavy castor drowzes back in chair,
And from her delicate fingers slips away
Her gaudy handiwork, if haply she
Hath got the whiff at menstruation-time.
Once more, if thou delayest in hot baths,
When thou art over-full, how readily
From stool in middle of the steaming water
Thou tumblest in a fit! How readily
The heavy fumes of charcoal wind their way
Into the brain, unless beforehand we
Of water 've drunk. But when a burning fever,
O'ermastering man, hath seized upon his limbs,
Then odour of wine is like a hammer-blow.
And seest thou not how in the very earth
Sulphur is gendered and bitumen thickens
With noisome stench? — What direful stench, too,
Scaptensula out-breathes from down below,
When men pursue the veins of silver and gold,
With pick-axe probing round the hidden realms
Deep in the earth? — Or what of deadly bane
The mines of gold exhale? O what a look,
And what a ghastly hue they give to men!
And seest thou not, or hearest, how they're wont
In little time to perish, and how fail
The life-stores in those folk whom mighty power
Of grim necessity confineth there
In such a task? Thus, this telluric earth
Out-streams with all these dread effluvia
And breathes them out into the open world
And into the visible regions under heaven.

Thus, too, those Birdless places must up-send

An essence bearing death to winged things,
Which from the earth rises into the breezes
To poison part of skiey space, and when
Thither the winged is on pennons borne,
There, seized by the unseen poison, 'tis ensnared,
And from the horizontal of its flight
Drops to the spot whence sprang the effluvium.
And when 'thas there collapsed, then the same power
Of that effluvium takes from all its limbs
The relics of its life. That power first strikes
The creatures with a wildering dizziness,
And then thereafter, when they're once down-fallen
Into the poison's very fountains, then
Life, too, they vomit out perforce, because
So thick the stores of bane around them fume.

Again, at times it happens that this power,
This exhalation of the Birdless places,
Dispels the air betwixt the ground and birds,
Leaving well-nigh a void. And thither when
In horizontal flight the birds have come,
Forthwith their buoyancy of pennons limps,
All useless, and each effort of both wings
Falls out in vain. Here, when without all power
To buoy themselves and on their wings to lean,
Lo, nature constrains them by their weight to slip
Down to the earth, and lying prostrate there
Along the well-nigh empty void, they spend
Their souls through all the openings of their frame.

Further, the water of wells is colder then
At summer time, because the earth by heat
Is rarefied, and sends abroad in air
Whatever seeds it peradventure have
Of its own fiery exhalations.
The more, then, the telluric ground is drained
Of heat, the colder grows the water hid
Within the earth. Further, when all the earth
Is by the cold compressed, and thus contracts
And, so to say, concretes, it happens, lo,
That by contracting it expresses then
Into the wells what heat it bears itself.

'Tis said at Hammon's fane a fountain is,
In daylight cold and hot in time of night.

This fountain men be-wonder over-much,
And think that suddenly it seethes in heat
By intense sun, the subterranean, when
Night with her terrible murk hath cloaked the lands —
What's not true reasoning by a long remove:
I' faith when sun o'erhead, touching with beams
An open body of water, had no power
To render it hot upon its upper side,
Though his high light possess such burning glare,
How, then, can he, when under the gross earth,
Make water boil and glut with fiery heat? —
And, specially, since scarcely potent he
Through hedging walls of houses to inject
His exhalations hot, with ardent rays.
What, then's, the principle? Why, this, indeed:
The earth about that spring is porous more
Than elsewhere the telluric ground, and be
Many the seeds of fire hard by the water;
On this account, when night with dew-fraught shades
Hath whelmed the earth, anon the earth deep down
Grows chill, contracts; and thuswise squeezes out
Into the spring what seeds she holds of fire
(As one might squeeze with fist), which render hot
The touch and steam of the fluid. Next, when sun,
Up-risen, with his rays has split the soil
And rarefied the earth with waxing heat,
Again into their ancient abodes return
The seeds of fire, and all the Hot of water
Into the earth retires; and this is why
The fountain in the daylight gets so cold.
Besides, the water's wet is beat upon
By rays of sun, and, with the dawn, becomes
Rarer in texture under his pulsing blaze;
And, therefore, whatso seeds it holds of fire
It renders up, even as it renders oft
The frost that it contains within itself
And thaws its ice and looseneth the knots.
There is, moreover, a fountain cold in kind
That makes a bit of tow (above it held)
Take fire forthwith and shoot a flame; so, too,
A pitch-pine torch will kindle and flare round
Along its waves, wherever 'tis impelled
Afloat before the breeze. No marvel, this:
Because full many seeds of heat there be

Within the water; and, from earth itself
Out of the deeps must particles of fire
Athrough the entire fountain surge aloft,
And speed in exhalations into air
Forth and abroad (yet not in numbers enow
As to make hot the fountain). And, moreo'er,
Some force constrains them, scattered through the water,
Forthwith to burst abroad, and to combine
In flame above. Even as a fountain far
There is at Aradus amid the sea,
Which bubbles out sweet water and disparts
From round itself the salt waves; and, behold,
In many another region the broad main
Yields to the thirsty mariners timely help,
Belching sweet waters forth amid salt waves.
Just so, then, can those seeds of fire burst forth
Athrough that other fount, and bubble out
Abroad against the bit of tow; and when
They there collect or cleave unto the torch,
Forthwith they readily flash aflame, because
The tow and torches, also, in themselves
Have many seeds of latent fire. Indeed,
And seest thou not, when near the nightly lamps
Thou bringest a flaxen wick, extinguished
A moment since, it catches fire before
'Thas touched the flame, and in same wise a torch?
And many another object flashes aflame
When at a distance, touched by heat alone,
Before 'tis steeped in veritable fire.
This, then, we must suppose to come to pass
In that spring also.

Now to other things!
And I'll begin to treat by what decree
Of nature it came to pass that iron can be
By that stone drawn which Greeks the magnet call
After the country's name (its origin
Being in country of Magnesian folk).
This stone men marvel at; and sure it oft
Maketh a chain of rings, depending, lo,
From off itself! Nay, thou mayest see at times
Five or yet more in order dangling down
And swaying in the delicate winds, whilst one
Depends from other, cleaving to under-side,

And ilk one feels the stone's own power and bonds —
So over-masteringly its power flows down.

In things of this sort, much must be made sure
Ere thou account of the thing itself canst give,
And the approaches roundabout must be;
Wherefore the more do I exact of thee
A mind and ears attent.

First, from all things
We see soever, evermore must flow,
Must be discharged and strewn about, about,
Bodies that strike the eyes, awaking sight.
From certain things flow odours evermore,
As cold from rivers, heat from sun, and spray
From waves of ocean, eater-out of walls
Along the coasts. Nor ever cease to seep
The varied echoings athrough the air.
Then, too, there comes into the mouth at times
The wet of a salt taste, when by the sea
We roam about; and so, whene'er we watch
The wormwood being mixed, its bitter stings.
To such degree from all things is each thing
Borne streamingly along, and sent about
To every region round; and nature grants
Nor rest nor respite of the onward flow,
Since 'tis incessantly we feeling have,
And all the time are suffered to descry
And smell all things at hand, and hear them sound.

Now will I seek again to bring to mind
How porous a body all things have — a fact
Made manifest in my first canto, too.
For, truly, though to know this doth import
For many things, yet for this very thing
On which straightway I'm going to discourse,
'Tis needful most of all to make it sure
That naught's at hand but body mixed with void.
A first ensample: in grottos, rocks o'erhead
Sweat moisture and distil the oozy drops;
Likewise, from all our body seeps the sweat;
There grows the beard, and along our members all
And along our frame the hairs. Through all our veins
Disseminates the foods, and gives increase
And aliment down to the extreme parts,

Even to the tiniest finger-nails. Likewise,
Through solid bronze the cold and fiery heat
We feel to pass; likewise, we feel them pass
Through gold, through silver, when we clasp in hand
The brimming goblets. And, again, there flit
Voices through houses' hedging walls of stone;
Odour seeps through, and cold, and heat of fire
That's wont to penetrate even strength of iron.
Again, where corselet of the sky girds round

And at same time, some Influence of bane,
When from Beyond 'thas stolen into [our world].
And tempests, gathering from the earth and sky,
Back to the sky and earth absorbed retire —
With reason, since there's naught that's fashioned not
With body porous.

Furthermore, not all

The particles which be from things thrown off
Are furnished with same qualities for sense,
Nor be for all things equally adapt.
A first ensample: the sun doth bake and parch
The earth; but ice he thaws, and with his beams
Compels the lofty snows, up-reared white
Upon the lofty hills, to waste away;
Then, wax, if set beneath the heat of him,
Melts to a liquid. And the fire, likewise,
Will melt the copper and will fuse the gold,
But hides and flesh it shrivels up and shrinks.
The water hardens the iron just off the fire,
But hides and flesh (made hard by heat) it softens.
The oleaster-tree as much delights
The bearded she-goats, verily as though
'Twere nectar-steeped and shed ambrosia;
Than which is naught that burgeons into leaf
More bitter food for man. A hog draws back
For marjoram oil, and every unguent fears
Fierce poison these unto the bristled hogs,
Yet unto us from time to time they seem,
As 'twere, to give new life. But, contrariwise,
Though unto us the mire be filth most foul,
To hogs that mire doth so delightsome seem
That they with wallowing from belly to back
Are never cloyed.

A point remains, besides,
Which best it seems to tell of, ere I go
To telling of the fact at hand itself.
Since to the varied things assigned be
The many pores, those pores must be diverse
In nature one from other, and each have
Its very shape, its own direction fixed.
And so, indeed, in breathing creatures be
The several senses, of which each takes in
Unto itself, in its own fashion ever,
Its own peculiar object. For we mark
How sounds do into one place penetrate,
Into another flavours of all juice,
And savour of smell into a third. Moreover,
One sort through rocks we see to seep, and, lo,
One sort to pass through wood, another still
Through gold, and others to go out and off
Through silver and through glass. For we do see
Through some pores form-and-look of things to flow,
Through others heat to go, and some things still
To speedier pass than others through same pores.
Of verity, the nature of these same paths,
Varying in many modes (as aforesaid)
Because of unlike nature and warp and woof
Of cosmic things, constrains it so to be.

Wherefore, since all these matters now have been
Established and settled well for us
As premises prepared, for what remains
‘Twill not be hard to render clear account
By means of these, and the whole cause reveal
Whereby the magnet lures the strength of iron.
First, stream there must from off the lode-stone seeds
Innumerable, a very tide, which smites
By blows that air asunder lying betwixt
The stone and iron. And when is emptied out
This space, and a large place between the two
Is made a void, forthwith the primal germs
Of iron, headlong slipping, fall conjoined
Into the vacuum, and the ring itself
By reason thereof doth follow after and go
Thuswise with all its body. And naught there is
That of its own primordial elements
More thoroughly knit or tighter linked coheres

Than nature and cold roughness of stout iron.
Wherefore, 'tis less a marvel what I said,
That from such elements no bodies can
From out the iron collect in larger throng
And be into the vacuum borne along,
Without the ring itself do follow after.
And this it does, and followeth on until
'Thath reached the stone itself and cleaved to it
By links invisible. Moreover, likewise,
The motion's assisted by a thing of aid
(Whereby the process easier becomes), —
Namely, by this: as soon as rarer grows
That air in front of the ring, and space between
Is emptied more and made a void, forthwith
It happens all the air that lies behind
Conveys it onward, pushing from the rear.
For ever doth the circumambient air
Drub things unmoved, but here it pushes forth
The iron, because upon one side the space
Lies void and thus receives the iron in.
This air, whereof I am reminding thee,
Winding athrough the iron's abundant pores
So subtly into the tiny parts thereof,
Shoves it and pushes, as wind the ship and sails.
The same doth happen in all directions forth:
From whatso side a space is made a void,
Whether from crosswise or above, forthwith
The neighbour particles are borne along
Into the vacuum; for of verity,
They're set a-going by poundings from elsewhere,
Nor by themselves of own accord can they
Rise upwards into the air. Again, all things
Must in their framework hold some air, because
They are of framework porous, and the air
Encompasses and borders on all things.
Thus, then, this air in iron so deeply stored
Is tossed evermore in vexed motion,
And therefore drubs upon the ring sans doubt
And shakes it up inside....

In sooth, that ring is thither borne along
To where 'thas once plunged headlong — thither, lo,
Unto the void whereto it took its start.

It happens, too, at times that nature of iron

Shrinks from this stone away, accustomed
By turns to flee and follow. Yea, I've seen
Those Samothracian iron rings leap up,
And iron filings in the brazen bowls
Seethe furiously, when underneath was set
The magnet stone. So strongly iron seems
To crave to flee that rock. Such discord great
Is gendered by the interposed brass,
Because, forsooth, when first the tide of brass
Hath seized upon and held possession of
The iron's open passage-ways, thereafter
Cometh the tide of the stone, and in that iron
Findeth all spaces full, nor now hath holes
To swim through, as before. 'Tis thus constrained
With its own current 'gainst the iron's fabric
To dash and beat; by means whereof it spues
Forth from itself — and through the brass stirs up —
The things which otherwise without the brass
It sucks into itself. In these affairs
Marvel thou not that from this stone the tide
Prevails not likewise other things to move
With its own blows: for some stand firm by weight,
As gold; and some cannot be moved forever,
Because so porous in their framework they
That there the tide streams through without a break,
Of which sort stuff of wood is seen to be.
Therefore, when iron (which lies between the two)
Hath taken in some atoms of the brass,
Then do the streams of that Magnesian rock
Move iron by their smittings.

Yet these things
Are not so alien from others, that I
Of this same sort am ill prepared to name
Ensamples still of things exclusively
To one another adapt. Thou seest, first,
How lime alone cementeth stones: how wood
Only by glue-of-bull with wood is joined —
So firmly too that oftener the boards
Crack open along the weakness of the grain
Ere ever those taurine bonds will lax their hold.
The vine-born juices with the water-springs
Are bold to mix, though not the heavy pitch
With the light oil-of-olive. And purple dye

Of shell-fish so uniteth with the wool's
Body alone that it cannot be ta'en
Away forever — nay, though thou gavest toil
To restore the same with the Neptunian flood,
Nay, though all ocean willed to wash it out
With all its waves. Again, gold unto gold
Doth not one substance bind, and only one?
And is not brass by tin joined unto brass?
And other ensamples how many might one find!
What then? Nor is there unto thee a need
Of such long ways and roundabout, nor boots it
For me much toil on this to spend. More fit
It is in few words briefly to embrace
Things many: things whose textures fall together
So mutually adapt, that cavities
To solids correspond, these cavities
Of this thing to the solid parts of that,
And those of that to solid parts of this —
Such joinings are the best. Again, some things
Can be the one with other coupled and held,
Linked by hooks and eyes, as 'twere; and this
Seems more the fact with iron and this stone.
Now, of diseases what the law, and whence
The Influence of bane upgathering can
Upon the race of man and herds of cattle
Kindle a devastation fraught with death,
I will unfold. And, first, I've taught above
That seeds there be of many things to us
Life-giving, and that, contrariwise, there must
Fly many round bringing disease and death.
When these have, haply, chanced to collect
And to derange the atmosphere of earth,
The air becometh baneful. And, lo, all
That Influence of bane, that pestilence,
Or from Beyond down through our atmosphere,
Like clouds and mists, descends, or else collects
From earth herself and rises, when, a-soak
And beat by rains unseasonable and suns,
Our earth hath then contracted stench and rot.
Seest thou not, also, that whoso arrive
In region far from fatherland and home
Are by the strangeness of the clime and waters
Distempered? — since conditions vary much.
For in what else may we suppose the clime

Among the Britons to differ from Aegypt's own
(Where totters awry the axis of the world),
Or in what else to differ Pontic clime
From Gades' and from climes adown the south,
On to black generations of strong men
With sun-baked skins? Even as we thus do see
Four climes diverse under the four main-winds
And under the four main-regions of the sky,
So, too, are seen the colour and face of men
Vastly to disagree, and fixed diseases
To seize the generations, kind by kind:
There is the elephant-disease which down
In midmost Aegypt, hard by streams of Nile,
Engendered is — and never elsewhere.
In Attica the feet are oft attacked,
And in Achæan lands the eyes. And so
The divers spots to divers parts and limbs
Are noxious; 'tis a variable air
That causes this. Thus when an atmosphere,
Alien by chance to us, begins to heave,
And noxious airs begin to crawl along,
They creep and wind like unto mist and cloud,
Slowly, and everything upon their way
They disarrange and force to change its state.
It happens, too, that when they've come at last
Into this atmosphere of ours, they taint
And make it like themselves and alien.
Therefore, asudden this devastation strange,
This pestilence, upon the waters falls,
Or settles on the very crops of grain
Or other meat of men and feed of flocks.
Or it remains a subtle force, suspense
In the atmosphere itself; and when therefrom
We draw our inhalations of mixed air,
Into our body equally its bane
Also we must suck in. In manner like,
Oft comes the pestilence upon the kine,
And sickness, too, upon the sluggish sheep.
Nor aught it matters whether journey we
To regions adverse to ourselves and change
The atmospheric cloak, or whether nature
Herself import a tainted atmosphere
To us or something strange to our own use
Which can attack us soon as ever it come.

THE PLAGUE ATHENS

'Twas such a manner of disease, 'twas such
Mortal miasma in Cecropian lands
Whilom reduced the plains to dead men's bones,
Unpeopled the highways, drained of citizens
The Athenian town. For coming from afar,
Rising in lands of Aegypt, traversing
Reaches of air and floating fields of foam,
At last on all Pandion's folk it swooped;
Whereat by troops unto disease and death
Were they o'er-given. At first, they'd bear about
A skull on fire with heat, and eyeballs twain
Red with suffusion of blank glare. Their throats,
Black on the inside, sweated oozy blood;
And the walled pathway of the voice of man
Was clogged with ulcers; and the very tongue,
The mind's interpreter, would trickle gore,
Weakened by torments, tardy, rough to touch.
Next when that Influence of bane had chocked,
Down through the throat, the breast, and streamed had
E'en into sullen heart of those sick folk,
Then, verily, all the fences of man's life
Began to topple. From the mouth the breath
Would roll a noisome stink, as stink to heaven
Rotting cadavers flung unburied out.
And, lo, thereafter, all the body's strength
And every power of mind would languish, now
In very doorway of destruction.
And anxious anguish and ululation (mixed
With many a groan) companioned alway
The intolerable torments. Night and day,
Recurrent spasms of vomiting would rack
Alway their thews and members, breaking down
With sheer exhaustion men already spent.
And yet on no one's body couldst thou mark
The skin with o'er-much heat to burn aglow,
But rather the body unto touch of hands
Would offer a warmish feeling, and thereby
Show red all over, with ulcers, so to say,
Inbranded, like the "sacred fires" o'erspread
Along the members. The inward parts of men,
In truth, would blaze unto the very bones;
A flame, like flame in furnaces, would blaze

Within the stomach. Nor couldst aught apply
Unto their members light enough and thin
For shift of aid — but coolness and a breeze
Ever and ever. Some would plunge those limbs
On fire with bane into the icy streams,
Hurling the body naked into the waves;
Many would headlong fling them deeply down
The water-pits, tumbling with eager mouth
Already agape. The insatiable thirst
That whelmed their parched bodies, lo, would make
A goodly shower seem like to scanty drops.
Respite of torment was there none. Their frames
Forspent lay prone. With silent lips of fear
Would Medicine mumble low, the while she saw
So many a time men roll their eyeballs round,
Staring wide-open, unvisited of sleep,
The heralds of old death. And in those months
Was given many another sign of death:
The intellect of mind by sorrow and dread
Deranged, the sad brow, the countenance
Fierce and delirious, the tormented ears
Beset with ringings, the breath quick and short
Or huge and intermittent, soaking sweat
A-glisten on neck, the spittle in fine gout
Tainted with colour of crocus and so salt,
The cough scarce wheezing through the rattling throat.
Aye, and the sinews in the fingered hands
Were sure to contract, and sure the jointed frame
To shiver, and up from feet the cold to mount
Inch after inch: and toward the supreme hour
At last the pinched nostrils, nose's tip
A very point, eyes sunken, temples hollow,
Skin cold and hard, the shuddering grimace,
The pulled and puffy flesh above the brows! —
O not long after would their frames lie prone
In rigid death. And by about the eighth
Resplendent light of sun, or at the most
On the ninth flaming of his flambeau, they
Would render up the life. If any then
Had 'scaped the doom of that destruction, yet
Him there awaited in the after days
A wasting and a death from ulcers vile
And black discharges of the belly, or else
Through the clogged nostrils would there ooze along

Much fouled blood, oft with an aching head:
Hither would stream a man's whole strength and flesh.
And whoso had survived that virulent flow
Of the vile blood, yet into thews of him
And into his joints and very genitals
Would pass the old disease. And some there were,
Dreading the doorways of destruction
So much, lived on, deprived by the knife
Of the male member; not a few, though lopped
Of hands and feet, would yet persist in life,
And some there were who lost their eyeballs: O
So fierce a fear of death had fallen on them!
And some, besides, were by oblivion
Of all things seized, that even themselves they knew
No longer. And though corpse on corpse lay piled
Unburied on ground, the race of birds and beasts
Would or spring back, scurrying to escape
The virulent stench, or, if they'd tasted there,
Would languish in approaching death. But yet
Hardly at all during those many suns
Appeared a fowl, nor from the woods went forth
The sullen generations of wild beasts —
They languished with disease and died and died.
In chief, the faithful dogs, in all the streets
Outstretched, would yield their breath distressfully
For so that Influence of bane would twist
Life from their members. Nor was found one sure
And universal principle of cure:
For what to one had given the power to take
The vital winds of air into his mouth,
And to gaze upward at the vaults of sky,
The same to others was their death and doom.

In those affairs, O awfulest of all,
O pitiable most was this, was this:
Whoso once saw himself in that disease
Entangled, ay, as damned unto death,
Would lie in wanhope, with a sullen heart,
Would, in fore-vision of his funeral,
Give up the ghost, O then and there. For, lo,
At no time did they cease one from another
To catch contagion of the greedy plague, —
As though but woolly flocks and horned herds;
And this in chief would heap the dead on dead:

For who forbore to look to their own sick,
O these (too eager of life, of death afraid)
Would then, soon after, slaughtering Neglect
Visit with vengeance of evil death and base —
Themselves deserted and forlorn of help.
But who had stayed at hand would perish there
By that contagion and the toil which then
A sense of honour and the pleading voice
Of weary watchers, mixed with voice of wail
Of dying folk, forced them to undergo.
This kind of death each nobler soul would meet.
The funerals, uncompanioned, forsaken,
Like rivals contended to be hurried through.

And men contending to ensepulchre
Pile upon pile the throng of their own dead:
And weary with woe and weeping wandered home;
And then the most would take to bed from grief.
Nor could be found not one, whom nor disease
Nor death, nor woe had not in those dread times
Attacked.

By now the shepherds and neatherds all,
Yea, even the sturdy guiders of curved ploughs,
Began to sicken, and their bodies would lie
Huddled within back-corners of their huts,
Delivered by squalor and disease to death.
O often and often couldst thou then have seen
On lifeless children lifeless parents prone,
Or offspring on their fathers', mothers' corpse
Yielding the life. And into the city poured
O not in least part from the countryside
That tribulation, which the peasantry
Sick, sick, brought thither, thronging from every quarter,
Plague-stricken mob. All places would they crowd,
All buildings too; whereby the more would death
Up-pile a-heap the folk so crammed in town.
Ah, many a body thirst had dragged and rolled
Along the highways there was lying strewn
Besides Silenus-headed water-fountains, —
The life-breath choked from that too dear desire
Of pleasant waters. Ah, everywhere along
The open places of the populace,
And along the highways, O thou mightest see
Of many a half-dead body the sagged limbs,

Rough with squalor, wrapped around with rags,
Perish from very nastiness, with naught
But skin upon the bones, well-nigh already
Buried — in ulcers vile and obscene filth.
All holy temples, too, of deities
Had Death becrammed with the carcasses;
And stood each fane of the Celestial Ones
Laden with stark cadavers everywhere —
Places which warders of the shrines had crowded
With many a guest. For now no longer men
Did mightily esteem the old Divine,
The worship of the gods: the woe at hand
Did over-master. Nor in the city then
Remained those rites of sepulture, with which
That pious folk had evermore been wont
To buried be. For it was wildered all
In wild alarms, and each and every one
With sullen sorrow would bury his own dead,
As present shift allowed. And sudden stress
And poverty to many an awful act
Impelled; and with a monstrous screaming they
Would, on the frames of alien funeral pyres,
Place their own kin, and thrust the torch beneath
Oft brawling with much bloodshed round about
Rather than quit dead bodies loved in life.

The Latin Text



Samos, Greece — the birthplace of Epicurus in 99 BC

CONTENTS OF THE LATIN TEXT



In this section of the eBook, readers can view the original Latin text of Lucretius' *De rerum natura*. You may wish to Bookmark this page for future reference.

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Liber Primus

Aeneadum genetrix, hominum divomque voluptas,
alma Venus, caeli subter labentia signa
quae mare navigerum, quae terras frugiferentis
concelebras, per te quoniam genus omne animantum
5 concipitur visitque exortum lumina solis:
te, dea, te fugiunt venti, te nubila caeli
adventumque tuum, tibi suavis daedala tellus
summittit flores, tibi rident aequora ponti
placatumque nitet diffuso lumine caelum.
10 nam simul ac species patefactast verna diei
et reserata viget genitabilis aura favoni,
aeriae primum volucris te, diva, tuumque
significant initum percussae corda tua vi.
inde ferae pecudes persultant pabula laeta
15 et rapidos tranant amnis: ita capta lepore
te sequitur cupide quo quamque inducere pergis.
denique per maria ac montis fluviosque rapacis
frondiferasque domos avium camposque virentis
omnibus incutiens blandum per pectora amorem
20 efficis ut cupide generatim saecula propagent.
quae quoniam rerum naturam sola gubernas
nec sine te quicquam dias in luminis oras
exoritur neque fit laetum neque amabile quicquam,
te sociam studeo scribendis versibus esse,
25 quos ego de rerum natura pangere conor
Memmiadae nostro, quem tu, dea, tempore in omni
omnibus ornatum voluisti excellere rebus.
quo magis aeternum da dictis, diva, leporem.
effice ut interea fera moenera militiai
30 per maria ac terras omnis sopita quiescant;
nam tu sola potes tranquilla pace iuvare
mortalis, quoniam belli fera moenera Mavors
armipotens regit, in gremium qui saepe tuum se
reiciit aeterno devictus vulnere amoris,
35 atque ita suspiciens tereti cervice reposta
pascit amore avidos inhians in te, dea, visus
eque tuo pendet resupini spiritus ore.
hunc tu, diva, tuo recubantem corpore sancto
circum fusa super, suavis ex ore loquellas
40 funde petens placidam Romanis, incluta, pacem;
nam neque nos agere hoc patriai tempore iniquo

possumus aequo animo nec Memmi clara propago
talibus in rebus communi desse saluti.
omnis enim per se divum natura necessest
45 immortali aevo summa cum pace fruatur
semota ab nostris rebus seiunctaque longe;
nam privata dolore omni, privata periclis,
ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri,
nec bene promeritis capitur nec tangitur ira.
50 Quod super est, vacuas auris animumque sagacem
semotum a curis adhibe veram ad rationem,
ne mea dona tibi studio disposta fideli,
intellecta prius quam sint, contempta relinquo.
nam tibi de summa caeli ratione deumque
55 disserere incipiam et rerum primordia pandam,
unde omnis natura creet res, auctet alatque,
quove eadem rursum natura perempta resolvat,
quae nos materiem et genitalia corpora rebus
reddunda in ratione vocare et semina rerum
60 appellare suemus et haec eadem usurpare
corpora prima, quod ex illis sunt omnia primis.
Humana ante oculos foede cum vita iaceret
in terris oppressa gravi sub religione,
quae caput a caeli regionibus ostendebat
65 horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans,
primum Graius homo mortalis tollere contra
est oculos ausus primusque obsistere contra;
quem neque fama deum nec fulmina nec minitanti
murmure compressit caelum, sed eo magis acrem
70 inritat animi virtutem, effringere ut arcta
naturae primus portarum claustra cupiret.
ergo vivida vis animi pervicit et extra
processit longe flammantia moenia mundi
atque omne immensum peragravit mente animoque,
75 unde refert nobis victor quid possit oriri,
quid nequeat, finita potestas denique cuique
qua nam sit ratione atque alte terminus haerens.
quare religio pedibus subiecta vicissim
opteritur, nos exaequat victoria caelo.
80 Illud in his rebus vereor, ne forte rearis
impia te rationis inire elementa viamque
indugredi sceleris. quod contra saepius illa
religio peperit scelerosa atque impia facta.
Aulide quo pacto Triviai virginis aram
85 Iphianassai turparunt sanguine foede

ductores Danaum delecti, prima virorum.
cui simul infula virgineos circum data comptus
ex utraque pari malarum parte profusast,
et maestum simul ante aras adstare parentem
90 sensit et hunc propter ferrum celare ministros
aspectuque suo lacrimas effundere civis,
muta metu terram genibus summissa petebat.
nec miserae prodesse in tali tempore quibat,
quod patrio princeps donarat nomine regem;
95 nam sublata virum manibus tremibundaque ad aras
deductast, non ut sollemni more sacrorum
perfecto posset claro comitari Hymenaeo,
sed casta incestu nubendi tempore in ipso
hostia concideret mactatu maesta parentis,
100 exitus ut classi felix faustusque daretur.
tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.
Tutemet a nobis iam quovis tempore vatum
terrilocus victus dictis desciscere quaeres.
quippe etenim quam multa tibi iam fingere possunt
105 somnia, quae vitae rationes vertere possint
fortunasque tuas omnis turbare timore!
et merito; nam si certam finem esse viderent
aerumnarum homines, aliqua ratione valerent
religionibus atque minis obsistere vatum.
110 nunc ratio nulla est restandi, nulla facultas,
aeternas quoniam poenas in morte timendum.
ignoratur enim quae sit natura animai,
nata sit an contra nascentibus insinuetur
et simul intereat nobiscum morte dirempta
115 an tenebras Orci visat vastasque lacunas
an pecudes alias divinitus insinuet se,
Ennius ut noster cecinit, qui primus amoeno
detulit ex Helicone perenni fronde coronam,
per gentis Italas hominum quae clara clueret;
120 etsi praeterea tamen esse Acherusia templa
Ennius aeternis exponit versibus edens,
quo neque permaneant animae neque corpora nostra,
sed quaedam simulacra modis pallentia miris;
unde sibi exortam semper florentis Homeri
125 commemorat speciem lacrimas effundere salsas
coepisse et rerum naturam expandere dictis.
qua propter bene cum superis de rebus habenda
nobis est ratio, solis lunaeque meatus
qua fiant ratione, et qua vi quaeque gerantur

130 in terris, tunc cum primis ratione sagaci
unde anima atque animi constet natura videndum,
et quae res nobis vigilantibus obvia mentes
terrificet morbo adfectis somnoque sepultis,
cernere uti videamur eos audireque coram,
135 morte obita quorum tellus amplectitur ossa.
Nec me animi fallit Graiorum obscura reperta
difficile inlustrare Latinis versibus esse,
multa novis verbis praesertim cum sit agendum
propter egestatem linguae et rerum novitatem;
140 sed tua me virtus tamen et sperata voluptas
suavis amicitiae quemvis efferre laborem
suadet et inducit noctes vigilare serenas
quaerentem dictis quibus et quo carmine demum
clara tuae possim praepandere lumina menti,
145 res quibus occultas penitus convisere possis.
hunc igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque necessest
non radii solis neque lucida tela diei
discutiant, sed naturae species ratioque.
Principium cuius hinc nobis exordia sumet,
150 nullam rem e nihilo gigni divinitus umquam.
quippe ita formido mortalis continet omnis,
quod multa in terris fieri caeloque tuentur,
quorum operum causas nulla ratione videre
possunt ac fieri divino numine rentur.
quas ob res ubi viderimus nil posse creari
de nihilo, tum quod sequimur iam rectius inde
perspiciemus, et unde queat res quaeque creari
155 et quo quaeque modo fiant opera sine divom.
Nam si de nihilo fierent, ex omnibus rebus
omne genus nasci posset, nil semine egeret.
e mare primum homines, e terra posset oriri
squamigerum genus et volucres erumpere caelo;
armenta atque aliae pecudes, genus omne ferarum,
incerto partu culta ac deserta tenerent.
165 nec fructus idem arboribus constare solerent,
sed mutarentur, ferre omnes omnia possent.
quippe ubi non essent genitalia corpora cuique,
qui posset mater rebus consistere certa?
at nunc seminibus quia certis quaeque creantur,
170 inde enascitur atque oras in luminis exit,
materies ubi inest cuiusque et corpora prima;
atque hac re nequeunt ex omnibus omnia gigni,
quod certis in rebus inest secreta facultas.

Praeterea cur vere rosam, frumenta calore,
175 vites autumno fundi suadente videmus,
si non, certa suo quia tempore semina rerum
cum confluerunt, patefit quod cumque creatur,
dum tempestates adsunt et vivida tellus
tuto res teneras effert in luminis oras?
180 quod si de nihilo fierent, subito exorerentur
incerto spatio atque alienis partibus anni,
quippe ubi nulla forent primordia, quae genitali
concilio possent arceri tempore iniquo.
Nec porro augendis rebus spatio foret usus
185 seminis ad coitum, si e nilo crescere possent;
nam fierent iuvenes subito ex infantibus parvis
e terraque exorta repente arbusta salirent.
quorum nil fieri manifestum est, omnia quando
paulatim crescunt, ut par est semine certo,
190 crescentesque genus servant; ut noscere possis
quicque sua de materia grandescere alique.
Huc accedit uti sine certis imbribus anni
laetificos nequeat fetus submittere tellus
nec porro secreta cibo natura animantum
195 propagare genus possit vitamque tueri;
ut potius multis communia corpora rebus
multa putes esse, ut verbis elementa videmus,
quam sine principiis ullam rem existere posse.
Denique cur homines tantos natura parare
200 non potuit, pedibus qui pontum per vada possent
transire et magnos manibus divellere montis
multaque vivendo vitalia vincere saecula,
si non, materies quia rebus reddita certast
gignundis, e qua constat quid possit oriri?
205 nil igitur fieri de nilo posse fatendumst,
semine quando opus est rebus, quo quaeque creatae
aeris in teneras possint proferrier auras.
Postremo quoniam incultis praestare videmus
cultu loca et manibus melioris reddere fetus,
210 esse videlicet in terris primordia rerum
quae nos fecundas vertentes vomere glebas
terraique solum subigentes cimus ad ortus;
quod si nulla forent, nostro sine quaeque labore
sponte sua multo fieri meliora videres.
215 Huc accedit uti quicque in sua corpora rursum
dissoluat natura neque ad nihilum interemat res.
nam siquid mortale e cunctis partibus esset,

ex oculis res quaeque repente erepta periret;
nulla vi foret usus enim, quae partibus eius
220 discidium parere et nexus exsolvere posset.
quod nunc, aeterno quia constant semine quaeque,
donec vis obiit, quae res diverberet ictu
aut intus penetret per inania dissoluatque,
nullius exitium patitur natura videri.

225 Praeterea quae cumque vetustate amovet aetas,
si penitus peremit consumens materiem omnem,
unde animale genus generatim in lumina vitae
reducit Venus, aut reductum daedala tellus
unde alit atque auget generatim pabula praebens?

230 unde mare ingenuei fontes externaque longe
flumina suppeditant? unde aether sidera pascit?
omnia enim debet, mortali corpore quae sunt,
infinita aetas consumpse ante acta diesque.

quod si in eo spatio atque ante acta aetate fuere
235 e quibus haec rerum consistit summa refecta,
inmortali sunt natura praedita certe.

haud igitur possunt ad nilum quaeque reverti.
Denique res omnis eadem vis causaque volgo
conficeret, nisi materies aeterna teneret,

240 inter se nexus minus aut magis indupedita;
tactus enim leti satis esset causa profecto,
quippe ubi nulla forent aeterno corpore, quorum
contextum vis deberet dissolvere quaeque.

at nunc, inter se quia nexus principiorum

245 dissimiles constant aeternaque materies est,
incolumi remanent res corpore, dum satis acris
vis obeat pro textura cuiusque reperta.

haud igitur redit ad nihilum res ulla, sed omnes
discidio redeunt in corpora materiai.

250 postremo pereunt imbres, ubi eos pater aether
in gremium matris terrai praecipitavit;

at nitidae surgunt fruges ramique virescunt
arboribus, crescunt ipsae fetuque gravantur.

hinc alitur porro nostrum genus atque ferarum,

255 hinc laetas urbes pueris florere videmus
frondiferasque novis avibus canere undique silvas,
hinc fessae pecudes pinguis per pabula laeta
corpora deponunt et candens lacteus umor
uberibus manat distentis, hinc nova proles

260 artubus infirmis teneras lasciva per herbas
ludit lacte mero mentes percussa novellas.

haud igitur penitus pereunt quaecumque videntur,
quando alit ex alio reficit natura nec ullam
rem gigni patitur nisi morte adiuta aliena.

265 Nunc age, res quoniam docui non posse creari
de nihilo neque item genitas ad nil revocari,
ne qua forte tamen coeptes diffidere dictis,
quod nequeunt oculis rerum primordia cerni,
accipe praeterea quae corpora tute necessest
270 confiteare esse in rebus nec posse videri.

Principio venti vis verberat incita corpus
ingentisque ruit navis et nubila differt,
inter dum rapido percurrens turbine campos
arboribus magnis sternit montisque supremos
275 silvifragis vexat flabris: ita perfurit acri
cum fremitu saevitque minaci murmure pontus.
sunt igitur venti ni mirum corpora caeca,
quae mare, quae terras, quae denique nubila caeli
verrunt ac subito vexantia turbine raptant,

280 nec ratione fluunt alia stragemque propagant
et cum mollis aquae fertur natura repente
flumine abundanti, quam largis imbribus auget
montibus ex altis magnus decursus aquai
fragmina coniciens silvarum arbustaque tota,
285 nec validi possunt pontes venientis aquai
vim subitam tolerare: ita magno turbidus imbri
molibus incurrit validis cum viribus amnis,
dat sonitu magno stragem volvitque sub undis
grandia saxa, ruit qua quidquid fluctibus obstat.

290 sic igitur debent venti quoque flamina ferri,
quae vel uti validum cum flumen procubere
quam libet in partem, trudunt res ante ruuntque
impetibus crebris, inter dum vertice torto
corripiunt rapidique rotanti turbine portant.

295 quare etiam atque etiam sunt venti corpora caeca,
quandoquidem factis et moribus aemula magnis
amnibus inveniuntur, aperto corpore qui sunt.

Tum porro varios rerum sentimus odores
nec tamen ad naris venientis cernimus umquam
300 nec calidos aestus tuimur nec frigora quimus
usurpare oculis nec voces cernere suemus;
quae tamen omnia corporea constare necessest
natura, quoniam sensus inpellere possunt;
tangere enim et tangi, nisi corpus, nulla potest res.

305 Denique fluctifrago suspensae in litore vestis

uuescunt, eadem dispansae in sole serescunt.
at neque quo pacto persederit umor aquai
visumst nec rursus quo pacto fugerit aestu.
in parvas igitur partis dispergitur umor,
310 quas oculi nulla possunt ratione videre.
quin etiam multis solis redeuntibus annis
anulus in digito subter tenuatur habendo,
stilicidi casus lapidem cavat, uncus aratri
ferreus occulte decrescit vomer in arvis,
315 strataque iam volgi pedibus detrita viarum
saxea conspiciamus; tum portas propter aena
signa manus dexteris ostendunt adtenuari
saepe salutantum tactu praeterque meantum.
haec igitur minui, cum sint detrita, videmus.
320 sed quae corpora decedant in tempore quoque,
invida praecluserit speciem natura videndi.
Postremo quae cumque dies natura rebus
paulatim tribuit moderatim crescere cogens,
nulla potest oculorum acies contenta tueri,
325 nec porro quae cumque aevo macieque senescunt,
nec, mare quae impendent, vesco sale saxa peresa
quid quoque amittant in tempore cernere possis.
corporibus caecis igitur natura gerit res.
Nec tamen undique corporea stipata tenentur
330 omnia natura; namque est in rebus inane.
quod tibi cognosse in multis erit utile rebus
nec sinet errantem dubitare et quaerere semper
de summa rerum et nostris diffidere dictis.
qua propter locus est intactus inane vacansque.
335 quod si non esset, nulla ratione moveri
res possent; namque officium quod corporis exstat,
officere atque obstare, id in omni tempore adesset
omnibus; haud igitur quicquam procedere posset,
principium quoniam cedendi nulla daret res.
340 at nunc per maria ac terras sublimaque caeli
multa modis multis varia ratione moveri
cernimus ante oculos, quae, si non esset inane,
non tam sollicito motu privata carerent
quam genita omnino nulla ratione fuissent,
345 undique materies quoniam stipata quiesceret.
Praeterea quamvis solidae res esse putentur,
hinc tamen esse licet raro cum corpore cernas.
in saxis ac speluncis permanat aquarum
liquidus umor et uberibus flent omnia guttis.

350 dissipat in corpus sese cibus omne animantum;
crescunt arbusta et fetus in tempore fundunt,
quod cibus in totas usque ab radicibus imis
per truncos ac per ramos diffunditur omnis.
inter saepta meant voces et clausa domorum
355 transvolitant, rigidum permanat frigus ad ossa.
quod nisi inania sint, qua possent corpora quaeque
transire, haud ulla fieri ratione videres.
Denique cur alias aliis praestare videmus
pondere res rebus nihilo maiore figura?
360 nam si tantundemst in lanae glomere quantum
corporis in plumbo est, tantundem pendere par est,
corporis officiumst quoniam premere omnia deorsum,
contra autem natura manet sine pondere inanis.
ergo quod magnumst aequae leviusque videtur,
365 ni mirum plus esse sibi declarat inanis;
at contra gravius plus in se corporis esse
dedicat et multo vacui minus intus habere.
est igitur ni mirum id quod ratione sagaci
quaerimus, admixtum rebus, quod inane vocamus.
370 Illud in his rebus ne te deducere vero
possit, quod quidam fingunt, praecurrere cogor.
cedere squamigeris latices nitentibus aiunt
et liquidas aperire vias, quia post loca pisces
linquant, quo possint cedentes confluere undae;
375 sic alias quoque res inter se posse moveri
et mutare locum, quamvis sint omnia plena.
scilicet id falsa totum ratione receptumst.
nam quo squamigeri poterunt procedere tandem,
ni spatium dederint latices? concedere porro
380 quo poterunt undae, cum pisces ire nequibunt?
aut igitur motu privandumst corpora quaeque
aut esse admixtum dicendumst rebus inane,
unde initum primum capiat res quaeque movendi.
Postremo duo de concursu corpora lata
385 si cita dissiliant, nempe aer omne necessest,
inter corpora quod fiat, possidat inane.
is porro quamvis circum celerantibus auris
confluat, haud poterit tamen uno tempore totum
compleri spatium; nam primum quemque necessest
390 occupet ille locum, deinde omnia possideantur.
quod si forte aliquis, cum corpora dissilueret,
tum putat id fieri quia se condenseat aer,
errat; nam vacuum tum fit quod non fuit ante

et repletur item vacuum quod constitit ante,
395 nec tali ratione potest denserier aer
nec, si iam posset, sine inani posset, opinor,
ipse in se trahere et partis conducere in unum.
Qua propter, quamvis causando multa moreris,
esse in rebus inane tamen fateare necessest.
400 multaque praeterea tibi possum commemorando
argumenta fidem dictis conradere nostris.
verum animo satis haec vestigia parva sagaci
sunt, per quae possis cognoscere cetera tute.
namque canes ut montivagae persaepe ferai
405 naribus inveniunt intectas fronde quietes,
cum semel institerunt vestigia certa viai,
sic alid ex alio per te tute ipse videre
talibus in rebus poteris caecasque latebras
insinuare omnis et verum protrahere inde.
410 quod si pigraris paulumve recesseris ab re,
hoc tibi de plano possum promittere, Memmi:
usque adeo largos haustus e fontibus magnis
lingua meo suavis diti de pectore fundet,
ut verear ne tarda prius per membra senectus
415 serpat et in nobis vitai claustra resolvat,
quam tibi de quavis una re versibus omnis
argumentorum sit copia missa per auris.
Sed nunc ut repetam coeptum pertexere dictis,
omnis ut est igitur per se natura duabus
420 constitit in rebus; nam corpora sunt et inane,
haec in quo sita sunt et qua diversa moventur.
corpus enim per se communis dedicat esse
sensus; cui nisi prima fides fundata valebit,
haut erit occultis de rebus quo referentes
425 confirmare animi quicquam ratione queamus.
tum porro locus ac spatium, quod inane vocamus,
si nullum foret, haut usquam sita corpora possent
esse neque omnino quoquam diversa meare;
id quod iam supera tibi paulo ostendimus ante.
430 praeterea nihil est quod possis dicere ab omni
corpore seiunctum secretumque esse ab inani,
quod quasi tertia sit numero natura reperta.
nam quod cumque erit, esse aliquid debebit id ipsum
augmine vel grandi vel parvo denique, dum sit;
435 cui si tactus erit quamvis levis exiguusque,
corporis augebit numerum summamque sequetur;
sin intactile erit, nulla de parte quod ullam

rem prohibere queat per se transire meantem,
scilicet hoc id erit, vacuum quod inane vocamus.

440 Praeterea per se quod cumque erit, aut faciet quid
aut aliis fungi debebit agentibus ipsum
aut erit ut possint in eo res esse gerique.

at facere et fungi sine corpore nulla potest res
nec praebere locum porro nisi inane vacansque.

445 ergo praeter inane et corpora tertia per se
nulla potest rerum in numero natura relinqui,
nec quae sub sensus cadat ullo tempore nostros
nec ratione animi quam quisquam possit apisci.
Nam quae cumque cluent, aut his coniuncta duabus

450 rebus ea invenies aut horum eventa videbis.
coniunctum est id quod nusquam sine permitiali
discidio potis est seiungi seque gregari,
pondus uti saxi, calor ignis, liquor aquai,
tactus corporibus cunctis, intactus inani.

455 servitium contra paupertas divitiaeque,
libertas bellum concordia cetera quorum
adventu manet incolumis natura abituque,
haec soliti sumus, ut par est, eventa vocare.
tempus item per se non est, sed rebus ab ipsis
460 consequitur sensus, transactum quid sit in aevo,
tum quae res instet, quid porro deinde sequatur;
nec per se quemquam tempus sentire fatendumst
semotum ab rerum motu placidaque quiete.

denique Tyndaridem raptam belloque subactas
465 Troiugenas gentis cum dicunt esse, videndumst
ne forte haec per se cogant nos esse fateri,
quando ea saecula hominum, quorum haec eventa fuerunt,
inrevocabilis abstulerit iam praeterita aetas;
namque aliud terris, aliud regionibus ipsis

470 eventum dici poterit quod cumque erit actum.
denique materies si rerum nulla fuisset
nec locus ac spatium, res in quo quaeque geruntur,
numquam Tyndaridis forma conflatus amore
ignis Alexandri Phrygio sub pectore gliscens

475 clara accendisset saevi certamina belli
nec clam durateus Troiianis Pergama partu
inflammasset equos nocturno Graiugenarum;
perspicere ut possis res gestas funditus omnis
non ita uti corpus per se constare neque esse

480 nec ratione cluere eadem qua constet inane,
sed magis ut merito possis eventa vocare

corporis atque loci, res in quo quaeque gerantur.
Corpora sunt porro partim primordia rerum,
partim concilio quae constant principiorum.
485 sed quae sunt rerum primordia, nulla potest vis
stinguere; nam solido vincunt ea corpore demum.
etsi difficile esse videtur credere quicquam
in rebus solido reperiri corpore posse.
transit enim fulmen caeli per saepta domorum
490 clamor ut ac voces, ferrum candescit in igni
dissiliuntque fero ferventi saxa vapore;
cum labefactatus rigor auri solvitur aestu,
tum glacies aeris flamma devicta liquescit;
permanat calor argentum penetralesque frigus,
495 quando utrumque manu retinentes pocula rite
sensimus infuso lympharum rore superne.
usque adeo in rebus solidi nihil esse videtur.
sed quia vera tamen ratio natura rerum
cogit, ades, paucis dum versibus expediamus
500 esse ea quae solido atque aeterno corpore constant,
semina quae rerum primordiaque esse docemus,
unde omnis rerum nunc constet summa creata.
Principio quoniam duplex natura duarum
dissimilis rerum longe constare repertast,
505 corporis atque loci, res in quo quaeque geruntur,
esse utramque sibi per se puramque necessest.
nam qua cumque vacat spatium, quod inane vocamus,
corpus ea non est; qua porro cumque tenet se
corpus, ea vacuum nequaquam constat inane.
510 sunt igitur solida ac sine inani corpora prima.
Praeterea quoniam genitis in rebus inanest,
materiem circum solidam constare necessest;
nec res ulla potest vera ratione probari
corpore inane suo celare atque intus habere,
515 si non, quod cohibet, solidum constare relinquant.
id porro nihil esse potest nisi material
concilium, quod inane queat rerum cohibere.
materies igitur, solido quae corpore constat,
esse aeterna potest, cum cetera dissoluantur.
520 Tum porro si nil esset quod inane vocaret,
omne foret solidum; nisi contra corpora certa
essent quae loca complerent quae cumque tenerent
omne quod est spatium, vacuum constaret inane.
alternis igitur ni mirum corpus inani
525 distinctum, quoniam nec plenum naviter extat

nec porro vacuum; sunt ergo corpora certa,
quae spatium pleno possint distinguere inane.
haec neque dissolui plagis extrinsecus icta
possunt nec porro penitus penetrata retexi
530 nec ratione queunt alia temptata labare;
id quod iam supra tibi paulo ostendimus ante.
nam neque conlidi sine inani posse videtur
quicquam nec frangi nec findi in bina secando
nec capere umorem neque item manabile frigus
535 nec penetralem ignem, quibus omnia conficiuntur.
et quo quaeque magis cohibet res intus inane,
tam magis his rebus penitus temptata labascit.
ergo si solida ac sine inani corpora prima
sunt ita uti docui, sint haec aeterna necessest.
540 Praeterea nisi materies aeterna fuisset,
antehac ad nihilum penitus res quaeque redissent
de nihiloque renata forent quae cumque videmus.
at quoniam supra docui nil posse creari
de nihilo neque quod genitumst ad nil revocari,
545 esse immortalis primordia corpore debent,
dissolui quo quaeque supremo tempore possint,
materies ut subpeditet rebus reparandis.
sunt igitur solida primordia simplicitate
nec ratione queunt alia servata per aevom
550 ex infinito iam tempore res reparare.
denique si nullam finem natura parasset
frangendis rebus, iam corpora materialia
usque redacta forent aevo frangente priore,
ut nihil ex illis a certo tempore posset
555 conceptum summum aetatis pervadere finem.
nam quidvis citius dissolvi posse videmus
quam rursus refici; qua propter longa diei
infinita aetas ante acti temporis omnis
quod fregisset adhuc disturbans dissoluensque,
560 numquam relicuo reparari tempore posset.
at nunc ni mirum frangendi reddita finis
certa manet, quoniam refici rem quamque videmus
et finita simul generatim tempora rebus
stare, quibus possint aevi contingere florem.
565 Huc accedit uti, solidissima materialia
corpora cum constant, possint tamen omnia reddi,
mollia quae fiunt, aer aqua terra vapores,
quo pacto fiant et qua vi quaeque gerantur,
admixtum quoniam semel est in rebus inane.

570 at contra si mollia sint primordia rerum,
unde queant validi silices ferrumque creari,
non poterit ratio reddi; nam funditus omnis
principio fundamenti natura carebit.
sunt igitur solida pollentia simplicitate,
575 quorum condenseo magis omnia conciliatu
artari possunt validasque ostendere viris.
porro si nullast frangendis reddita finis
corporibus, tamen ex aeterno tempore quaeque
nunc etiam superare necessest corpora rebus,
580 quae non dum clueant ullo temptata periclo.
at quoniam fragili natura praedita constant,
discrepat aeternum tempus potuisse manere
innumerabilibus plagis vexata per aevom.
Denique iam quoniam generatim reddita finis
585 crescendi rebus constat vitamque tenendi,
et quid quaeque queant per foedera naturai,
quid porro nequeant, sancitum quando quidem extat,
nec commutatur quicquam, quin omnia constant
usque adeo, variae volucres ut in ordine cunctae
590 ostendant maculas generalis corpore inesse,
inmutabilis materiae quoque corpus habere
debent ni mirum; nam si primordia rerum
commutari aliqua possent ratione revicta,
incertum quoque iam constet quid possit oriri,
595 quid nequeat, finita potestas denique cuique
qua nam sit ratione atque alte terminus haerens,
nec totiens possent generatim saecula referre
naturam mores victum motusque parentum.
Tum porro quoniam est extremum quodque cacumen
600 corporis illius, quod nostri cernere sensus
iam nequeunt, id ni mirum sine partibus extat
et minima constat natura nec fuit umquam
per se secretum neque post hac esse valebit,
alterius quoniamst ipsum pars primaque et una,
605 inde aliae atque aliae similes ex ordine partes
agmine condenseo naturam corporis explent;
quae quoniam per se nequeunt constare, necessest
haerere unde queant nulla ratione revelli.
sunt igitur solida primordia simplicitate,
610 quae minimis stipata cohaerent partibus arte.
non ex illorum conventu conciliata,
sed magis aeterna pollentia simplicitate,
unde neque avelli quicquam neque deminui iam

concedit natura reservans semina rebus.

615 Praeterea nisi erit minimum, parvissima quaeque
corpora constabunt ex partibus infinitis,
quippe ubi dimidiaie partis pars semper habebit
dimidiam partem nec res praefiniet ulla.

ergo rerum inter summam minimamque quod escit,
620 nil erit ut distet; nam quamvis funditus omnis
summa sit infinita, tamen, parvissima quae sunt,
ex infinitis constabunt partibus aequae.

quod quoniam ratio reclamat vera negatque
credere posse animum, victus fateare necessest
625 esse ea quae nullis iam praedita partibus extent
et minima constant natura. quae quoniam sunt,
illa quoque esse tibi solida atque aeterna fatendum.

Denique si minimas in partis cuncta resolvi
cogere consuesset rerum natura creatrix,

630 iam nihil ex illis eadem reparare valeret
propterea quia, quae nullis sunt partibus aucta,
non possunt ea quae debet genitalis habere
materies, varios conexus pondera plagas
concursus motus, per quas res quaeque geruntur.

635 Quapropter qui materiem rerum esse putarunt
ignem atque ex igni summam consistere solo,
magno opere a vera lapsi ratione videntur.

Heraclitus init quorum dux proelia primus,
clarus ob obscuram linguam magis inter inanis

640 quamde gravis inter Graios, qui vera requirunt;
omnia enim stolidi magis admirantur amantque,
inversis quae sub verbis latitantia cernunt,
veraque constituunt quae belle tangere possunt
auris et lepido quae sunt fucata sonore.

645 Nam cur tam variae res possent esse, requiro,
ex uno si sunt igni puroque creatae?

nil prodesset enim calidum denserier ignem
nec rare fieri, si partes ignis eandem
naturam quam totus habet super ignis haberent.

650 acrior ardor enim conductis partibus esset,
languidior porro disiectis disque supatis.
amplius hoc fieri nihil est quod posse rearis
talibus in causis, ne dum variantia rerum
tanta queat densis rarisque ex ignibus esse.

655 Id quoque: si faciant admixtum rebus inane,
denseri poterunt ignes rarique relinqui;
sed quia multa sibi cernunt contraria quae sint

et fugitant in rebus inane relinquere purum,
ardua dum metuunt, amittunt vera viai
660 nec rursum cernunt exempto rebus inane
omnia denseri fierique ex omnibus unum
corpus, nil ab se quod possit mittere raptim,
aestifer ignis uti lumen iacit atque vaporem,
ut videas non e stipatis partibus esse.

665 Quod si forte alia credunt ratione potesse
ignis in coetu stingui mutareque corpus,
scilicet ex nulla facere id si parte reparcent,
occidet ad nihilum ni mirum funditus ardor
omnis et e nihilo fient quae cumque creantur;
670 nam quod cumque suis mutatum finibus exit,
continuo hoc mors est illius quod fuit ante.
proinde aliquid superare necesse est incolume ollis,
ne tibi res redeant ad nilum funditus omnes
de nihiloque renata vigescat copia rerum.

675 Nunc igitur quoniam certissima corpora quaedam
sunt, quae conservant naturam semper eandem,
quorum abitu aut aditu mutatoque ordine mutant
naturam res et convertunt corpora sese,
scire licet non esse haec ignea corpora rerum.
680 nil referret enim quaedam decedere, abire
atque alia adtribui mutarique ordine quaedam,
si tamen ardoris naturam cuncta tenerent;
ignis enim foret omnimodis quod cumque crearet.
verum, ut opinor, itast: sunt quaedam corpora, quorum

685 concursus motus ordo positura figurae
efficiunt ignis mutatoque ordine mutant
naturam neque sunt igni simulata neque ulli
praeterea rei quae corpora mittere possit
sensibus et nostros adiectu tangere tactus.

690 dicere porro ignem res omnis esse neque ullam
rem veram in numero rerum constare nisi ignem,
quod facit hic idem, perdelirum esse videtur.
nam contra sensus ab sensibus ipse repugnat
et labefactat eos, unde omnia credita pendent,
695 unde hic cognitus est ipsi quem nominat ignem;
credit enim sensus ignem cognoscere vere,
cetera non credit, quae nilo clara minus sunt.
quod mihi cum vanum tum delirum esse videtur;
quo referemus enim? quid nobis certius ipsis
700 sensibus esse potest, qui vera ac falsa notemus?
Praeterea quare quisquam magis omnia tollat

et velit ardoris naturam linquere solam,
quam neget esse ignis, aliam tamen esse relinquat?
aequa videtur enim dementia dicere utrumque.

705 Quapropter qui materiem rerum esse putarunt
ignem atque ex igni summam consistere posse,
et qui principium gignundis aera rebus
constituere aut umorem qui cumque putarunt
figere res ipsum per se terramve creare

710 omnia et in rerum naturas vertier omnis,
magno opere a vero longe derrasse videntur.
adde etiam qui conduplicant primordia rerum
aera iungentes igni terramque liquori,
et qui quattuor ex rebus posse omnia rentur

715 ex igni terra atque anima procreare et imbri.
quorum Acragantinus cum primis Empedocles est,
insula quem triquetris terrarum gessit in oris,
quam fluitans circum magnis anfractibus aequor
Ionium glaucis aspargit virus ab undis

720 angustoque fretu rapidum mare dividit undis
Aeoliae terrarum oras a finibus eius.

hic est vasta Charybdis et hic Aetnaea minantur
murmura flammaram rursum se colligere iras,
faucibus eruptos iterum vis ut vomat ignis

725 ad caelumque ferat flammai fulgura rursum.
quae cum magna modis multis miranda videtur
gentibus humanis regio visendaque fertur
rebus opima bonis, multa munita virum vi,
nil tamen hoc habuisse viro praeclarius in se

730 nec sanctum magis et mirum carumque videtur.
carmina quin etiam divini pectoris eius
vociferantur et exponunt praeclara reperta,
ut vix humana videatur stirpe creatus.

Hic tamen et supra quos diximus inferiores

735 partibus egregie multis multoque minores,
quamquam multa bene ac divinitus invenientes
ex adyto tam quam cordis responsa dedere
sanctius et multo certa ratione magis quam
Pythia quae tripodi a Phoebi lauroque profatur,

740 principiis tamen in rerum fecere ruinas
et graviter magni magno cecidere ibi casu.
Primum quod motus exempto rebus inani
constituunt et res mollis rarasque relinquunt
aera solem ignem terras animalia frugis

745 nec tamen admiscent in eorum corpus inane;

deinde quod omnino finem non esse secandis
corporibus facient neque pausam stare fragori
nec prorsum in rebus minimum consistere quicquam,
cum videamus id extremum cuiusque cacumen
750 esse quod ad sensus nostros minimum esse videtur,
conicere ut possis ex hoc, quae cernere non quis
extremum quod habent, minimum consistere rerum.
Huc accedit item, quoniam primordia rerum
mollia constituunt, quae nos nativa videmus
755 esse et mortali cum corpore, funditus ut qui
debeat ad nihilum iam rerum summa reverti
de nihiloque renata vigescere copia rerum;
quorum utrumque quid a vero iam distet habebis.
Deinde inimica modis multis sunt atque veneno
760 ipsa sibi inter se; quare aut congressa peribunt
aut ita diffugient, ut tempestate coacta
fulmina diffugere atque imbris ventosque videmus.
Denique quattuor ex rebus si cuncta creantur
atque in eas rursum res omnia dissoluuntur,
765 qui magis illa queunt rerum primordia dici
quam contra res illorum retroque putari?
alternis gignuntur enim mutantque colorem
et totam inter se naturam tempore ab omni.
fulmina diffugere atque imbris ventosque videmus.
770 sin ita forte putas ignis terraeque coire
corpus et aerias auras roremque liquoris,
nil in concilio naturam ut mutet eorum,
nulla tibi ex illis poterit res esse creata,
non animans, non exanimo cum corpore, ut arbos;
775 quippe suam quicque in coetu variantis acervi
naturam ostendet mixtusque videbitur aer
cum terra simul et quodam cum rore manere.
at primordia gignundis in rebus oportet
naturam clandestinam caecamque adhibere,
780 emineat ne quid, quod contra pugnet et obstet
quo minus esse queat proprie quodcumque creatur.
Quin etiam repetunt a caelo atque ignibus eius
et primum faciunt ignem se vertere in auras
aeris, hinc imbrem gigni terramque creari
785 ex imbri retroque a terra cuncta reverti,
umorem primum, post aera, deinde calorem,
nec cessare haec inter se mutare, meare
a caelo ad terram, de terra ad sidera mundi.
quod facere haud ullo debent primordia pacto.

790 immutabile enim quiddam superare necessest,
ne res ad nihilum redigantur funditus omnes;
nam quod cumque suis mutatum finibus exit,
continuo hoc mors est illius quod fuit ante.
quapropter quoniam quae paulo diximus ante
795 in commutatum veniunt, constare necessest
ex aliis ea, quae nequeant convertier usquam,
ne tibi res redeant ad nilum funditus omnis;
quin potius tali natura praedita quaedam
corpora constituas, ignem si forte crearint,
800 posse eadem demptis paucis paucisque tributis,
ordine mutato et motu, facere aeris auras,
sic alias aliis rebus mutarier omnis?
'At manifesta palam res indicat' inquis 'in auras
aeris e terra res omnis crescere alique;
805 et nisi tempestas indulget tempore fausto
imbribus, ut tabe nimborum arbusta vacillent,
solque sua pro parte fovet tribuitque calorem,
crescere non possint fruges arbusta animantis.'
scilicet et nisi nos cibus aridus et tener umor
810 adiuvet, amisso iam corpore vita quoque omnis
omnibus e nervis atque ossibus exsoluatur;
adiutamur enim dubio procul atque alimur nos
certis ab rebus, certis aliae atque aliae res.
ni mirum quia multa modis communia multis
815 multarum rerum in rebus primordia mixta
sunt, ideo variis variae res rebus aluntur.
atque eadem magni refert primordia saepe
cum quibus et quali positura contineantur
et quos inter se dent motus accipiantque;
820 namque eadem caelum mare terras flumina solem
constituunt, eadem fruges arbusta animantis,
verum aliis alioque modo commixta moventur.
quin etiam passim nostris in versibus ipsis
multa elementa vides multis communia verbis,
825 cum tamen inter se versus ac verba necessest
confiteare et re et sonitu distare sonanti.
tantum elementa queunt permutato ordine solo;
at rerum quae sunt primordia, plura adhibere
possunt unde queant variae res quaeque creari.
830 Nunc et Anaxagorae scrutemur homoeomerian
quam Grai memorant nec nostra dicere lingua
concedit nobis patrii sermonis egestas,
sed tamen ipsam rem facilest exponere verbis.

principio, rerum quam dicit homoeomerian,
835 ossa videlicet e pauxillis atque minutis
ossibus hic et de pauxillis atque minutis
visceribus viscus gigni sanguenque creari
sanguinis inter se multis coeuntibus guttis
ex aurique putat micis consistere posse
840 aurum et de terris terram concreescere parvis,
ignibus ex ignis, umorem umoribus esse,
cetera consimili fingit ratione putatque.
nec tamen esse ulla de parte in rebus inane
concedit neque corporibus finem esse secandis.
845 quare in utraque mihi pariter ratione videtur
errare atque illi, supra quos diximus ante.
Adde quod inbecilla nimis primordia fingit;
si primordia sunt, simili quae praedita constant
natura atque ipsae res sunt aequaeque laborant
850 et pereunt, neque ab exitio res ulla refrenat.
nam quid in oppressu valido durabit eorum,
ut mortem effugiat, leti sub dentibus ipsis?
ignis an umor an aura? quid horum? sanguen an ossa?
nil ut opinor, ubi ex aequo res funditus omnis
855 tam mortalis erit quam quae manifesta videmus
ex oculis nostris aliqua vi victa perire.
at neque recidere ad nihilum res posse neque autem
crescere de nihilo testor res ante probatas.
Praeterea quoniam cibus auget corpus alitque,
860 scire licet nobis venas et sanguen et ossa

* * *

sive cibos omnis commixto corpore dicent
esse et habere in se nervorum corpora parva
ossaque et omnino venas partisque cruoris,
fiet uti cibus omnis et aridus et liquor ipse
865 ex alienigenis rebus constare putetur,
ossibus et nervis sanieque et sanguine mixto.
Praeterea quae cumque e terra corpora crescunt,
si sunt in terris, terram constare necessest
ex alienigenis, quae terris exoriuntur.
870 transfer item, totidem verbis utare licebit:
in lignis si flamma latet fumusque cinisque,
ex alienigenis consistant ligna necessest,
praeterea tellus quae corpora cumque alit auget
ex alienigenis, quae lignis exoriuntur.
875 Linquitur hic quaedam latitandi copia tenvis,

id quod Anaxagoras sibi sumit, ut omnibus omnis
res putet inmixtas rebus latitare, sed illud
apparere unum, cuius sint plurima mixta
et magis in promptu primaque in fronte locata.
880 quod tamen a vera longe ratione repulsumst;
conveniebat enim fruges quoque saepe, minaci
robores cum in saxi franguntur, mittere signum
sanguinis aut aliquid, nostro quae corpore aluntur.
cum lapidi in lapidem terimus, manare cruorem
885 consimili ratione herbis quoque saepe decebat,
et latices dulcis guttas similique sapore
mittere, lanigeras quali sunt ubere lactis,
scilicet et glebis terrarum saepe friatis
herbarum genera et fruges frondesque videri
890 dispartita inter terram latitare minute,
postremo in lignis cinerem fumumque videri,
cum prae fracta forent, ignisque latere minutos.
quorum nil fieri quoniam manifesta docet res,
scire licet non esse in rebus res ita mixtas,
895 verum semina multimodis inmixta latere
multarum rerum in rebus communia debent.
'At saepe in magnis fit montibus' inquit 'ut altis
arboribus vicina cacumina summa terantur
inter se validis facere id cogentibus austris,
900 donec flammai fulserunt flore coorto.'
scilicet et non est lignis tamen insitus ignis,
verum semina sunt ardoris multa, terendo
quae cum confluxere, creant incendia silvis.
quod si facta foret silvis abscondita flamma,
905 non possent ullum tempus celarier ignes,
conficerent volgo silvas, arbusta cremarent.
iamne vides igitur, paulo quod diximus ante,
permagni referre eadem primordia saepe
cum quibus et quali positura contineantur
910 et quos inter se dent motus accipiantque,
atque eadem paulo inter se mutata creare
ignes et lignum? quo pacto verba quoque ipsa
inter se paulo mutatis sunt elementis,
cum ligna atque ignes distincta voce notemus.
915 Denique iam quae cumque in rebus cernis apertis
si fieri non posse putas, quin materialia
corpora consimili natura praedita fingas,
hac ratione tibi pereunt primordia rerum:
fiet uti risu tremulo concussa cachinnent

920 et lacrimis salsis umectent ora genasque.
Nunc age, quod super est, cognosce et clarius audi.
nec me animi fallit quam sint obscura; sed acri
percussit thyrsos laudis spes magna meum cor
et simul incussit suavem mi in pectus amorem
925 Musarum, quo nunc instinctus mente vigenti
avia Pieridum peragro loca nullius ante
trita solo. iuvat integros accedere fontis
atque haurire iuvatque novos decerpere flores
insignemque meo capiti petere inde coronam,
930 unde prius nulli velarint tempora Musae;
primum quod magnis doceo de rebus et artis
religionum animum nodis exsolvere pergo,
deinde quod obscura de re tam lucida pango
carmina musaeo contingens cuncta lepore.
935 id quoque enim non ab nulla ratione videtur;
sed vel uti pueris absinthia taetra medentes
cum dare conantur, prius oras pocula circum
contingunt mellis dulci flavoque liquore,
ut puerorum aetas improvida ludificetur
940 laborum tenus, interea perpotet amarum
absinthii laticem deceptaque non capiatur,
sed potius tali facto recreata valescat,
sic ego nunc, quoniam haec ratio plerumque videtur
tristior esse quibus non est tractata, retroque
945 volgas abhorret ab hac, volui tibi suaviloquenti
carmine Pierio rationem exponere nostram
et quasi musaeo dulci contingere melle,
si tibi forte animum tali ratione tenere
versibus in nostris possem, dum perspicis omnem
950 naturam rerum, qua constet compta figura.
Sed quoniam docui solidissima materiai
corpora perpetuo volitare invicta per aevom,
nunc age, summa quaedam sit finis eorum
necne sit, evolvamus; item quod inane repertumst
955 seu locus ac spatium, res in quo quaeque gerantur,
pervideamus utrum finitum funditus omne
constet an immensum pateat vastaeque profundum.
Omne quod est igitur nulla regione viarum
finitumst; namque extremum debebat habere.
960 extremum porro nullius posse videtur
esse, nisi ultra sit quod finiat, ut videatur
quo non longius haec sensus natura sequatur.
nunc extra summam quoniam nihil esse fatendum,

non habet extremum, caret ergo fine modoque.
965 nec refert quibus adsistas regionibus eius;
usque adeo, quem quisque locum possedit, in omnis
tantundem partis infinitum omne relinquit.
Praeterea si iam finitum constituatur
omne quod est spatium, si quis procurrat ad oras
970 ultimus extremas iaciatque volatile telum,
id validis utrum contortum viribus ire
quo fuerit missum mavis longeque volare,
an prohibere aliquid censes obstareque posse?
alterutrum fatearis enim sumasque necessest.
975 quorum utrumque tibi effugium praecludit et omne
cogit ut exempta concedas fine patere.
nam sive est aliquid quod probeat efficiatque
quo minus quo missum est veniat finique locet se,
sive foras fertur, non est a fine profectum.
980 hoc pacto sequar atque, oras ubi cumque locaris
extremas, quaeram: quid telo denique fiet?
fiet uti nusquam possit consistere finis
effugiumque fugae prolatet copia semper.
Praeterea spatium summai totius omne
985 undique si inclusum certis consisteret oris
finitumque foret, iam copia materiai
undique ponderibus solidis confluet ad imum
nec res ulla geri sub caeli tegmine posset
nec foret omnino caelum neque lumina solis,
990 quippe ubi materies omnis cumulata iaceret
ex infinito iam tempore subsidendo.
at nunc ni mirum requies data principiorum
corporibus nullast, quia nil est funditus imum,
quo quasi confluere et sedes ubi ponere possint.
995 semper in adsiduo motu res quaeque geruntur
partibus in cunctis, infernaque suppeditantur
ex infinito cita corpora materiai.
Postremo ante oculos res rem finire videtur;
aer dissaepit collis atque aera montes,
1000 terra mare et contra mare terras terminat omnis;
omne quidem vero nihil est quod finiat extra.
est igitur natura loci spatiumque profundi,
quod neque clara suo percurrere fulmina cursu
perpetuo possint aevi labentia tractu
1005 nec prorsum facere ut restet minus ire meando;
usque adeo passim patet ingens copia rebus
finibus exemptis in cunctas undique partis.

Ipsa modum porro sibi rerum summa parare
ne possit, natura tenet, quae corpus inane
1010 et quod inane autem est finiri corpore cogit,
ut sic alternis infinita omnia reddat,
aut etiam alterutrum, nisi terminet alterum eorum,
simplice natura pateat tamen inmoderatum,
nec mare nec tellus neque caeli lucida templa
1015 nec mortale genus nec divum corpora sancta
exiguum possent horai sistere tempus;
nam dispulsa suo de coetu materiai
copia ferretur magnum per inane soluta,
sive adeo potius numquam concreta creasset
1020 ullam rem, quoniam cogi disiecta nequisset.
nam certe neque consilio primordia rerum
ordine se suo quaeque sagaci mente locarunt
nec quos quaeque darent motus pepigere profecto
sed quia multa modis multis mutata per omne
1025 ex infinito vexantur percita plagis,
omne genus motus et coetus experiundo
tandem deveniunt in talis disposituras,
qualibus haec rerum consistit summa creata,
et multos etiam magnos servata per annos
1030 ut semel in motus coniectast convenientis,
efficit ut largis avidum mare fluminis undis
integrent amnes et solis terra vapore
fota novet fetus summissaque gens animantum
floreat et vivant labentis aetheris ignes.
1035 quod nullo facerent pacto, nisi materiai
ex infinito suboriri copia posset,
unde amissa solent reparare in tempore quaeque.
nam vel uti privata cibo natura animantum
diffluit amittens corpus, sic omnia debent
1040 dissolui simul ac defecit suppeditare
materies aliqua ratione aversa viai.
nec plagae possunt extrinsecus undique summam
conservare omnem, quae cumque est conciliata.
cudere enim crebro possunt partemque morari,
1045 dum veniant aliae ac suppleri summa queatur;
inter dum resilire tamen coguntur et una
principiis rerum spatium tempusque fugai
largiri, ut possint a coetu libera ferri.
quare etiam atque etiam suboriri multa necessest,
1050 et tamen ut plagae quoque possint suppetere ipsae,
infinita opus est vis undique materiai.

Illud in his rebus longe fuge credere, Memmi,
 in medium summae quod dicunt omnia niti
 atque ideo mundi naturam stare sine ullis
 1055 ictibus externis neque quoquam posse resolvi
 summa atque ima, quod in medium sint omnia nixa,
 ipsum si quicquam posse in se sistere credis,
 et quae pondera sunt sub terris omnia sursum
 nitier in terraque retro requiescere posta,
 1060 ut per aquas quae nunc rerum simulacra videmus;
 et simili ratione animalia suppa vagari
 contendunt neque posse e terris in loca caeli
 recidere inferiora magis quam corpora nostra
 sponte sua possint in caeli templa volare;
 1065 illi cum videant solem, nos sidera noctis
 cernere et alternis nobiscum tempora caeli
 dividere et noctes parilis agitare diebus.
 sed vanus stolidis haec * * *
 amplexi quod habent perv * * *
 1070 nam medium nihil esse potest * * *
 infinita; neque omnino, si iam medium sit,
 possit ibi quicquam consistere * * *
 quam quavis alia longe ratione * * *
 omnis enim locus ac spatium, quod inane vocamus,
 1075 per medium, per non medium, concedere debet
 aequae ponderibus, motus qua cumque feruntur.
 nec quisquam locus est, quo corpora cum venerunt,
 ponderis amissa vi possint stare in inani;
 nec quod inane autem est ulli subsistere debet,
 1080 quin, sua quod natura petit, concedere pergat.
 haud igitur possunt tali ratione teneri
 res in concilium medii cuppedine victae.
 Praeterea quoniam non omnia corpora fingunt
 in medium niti, sed terrarum atque liquoris
 umorem ponti magnasque e montibus undas,
 1085 et quasi terreno quae corpore contineantur,
 at contra tenuis exponunt aeris auras
 et calidos simul a medio differrier ignis,
 atque ideo totum circum tremere aethera signis
 1090 et solis flammam per caeli caerula pasci,
 quod calor a medio fugiens se ibi conligat omnis,
 nec prorsum arboribus summos frondescere ramos
 posse, nisi a terris paulatim cuique cibatum

ne volucris ritu flammis moenia mundi
diffugiant subito magnum per inane soluta
et ne cetera consimili ratione sequantur
1105 neve ruant caeli tonitralia templa superne
terrae se pedibus raptim subducant et omnis
inter permixtas rerum caelique ruinas
corpora solventes abeat per inane profundum,
temporis ut puncto nihil extet reliquiarum
1110 desertum praeter spatium et primordia caeca.
nam qua cumque prius de parti corpora desse
constitues, haec rebus erit pars ianua leti,
hac se turba foras dabit omnis materiai.
Haec sic pernosces parva perductus opella;
1115 namque aliud ex alio clarescet nec tibi caeca
nox iter eripiet, quin ultima naturae
pervideas: ita res accendent lumina rebus.

Liber Secundus

Suave, mari magno turbantibus aequora ventis
e terra magnum alterius spectare laborem;
non quia vexari quemquamst iucunda voluptas,
sed quibus ipse malis careas quia cernere suavest.
suave etiam belli certamina magna tueri
5 per campos instructa tua sine parte pericli;
sed nihil dulcius est, bene quam munita tenere
edita doctrina sapientum templa serena,
despicere unde queas alios passimque videre
10 errare atque viam palantis quaerere vitae,
certare ingenio, contendere nobilitate,
noctes atque dies niti praestante labore
ad summas emergere opes rerumque potiri.
o miseras hominum mentes, o pectora caeca!
15 qualibus in tenebris vitae quantisque periclis
degitur hoc aevi quod cumquest! nonne videre
nihil aliud sibi naturam latrare, nisi ut qui
corpore seiunctus dolor absit, mente fruatur
iucundo sensu cura semota metuque?
20 ergo corpoream ad naturam pauca videmus
esse opus omnino: quae demant cumque dolorem,
delicias quoque uti multas substernere possint
gratius inter dum, neque natura ipsa requirit,
si non aurea sunt iuvenum simulacra per aedes
25 lampadas igniferas manibus retinentia dextris,
lumina nocturnis epulis ut suppeditentur,
nec domus argento fulget auroque renidet
nec citharae reboant laqueata aurataque templa,
cum tamen inter se prostrati in gramine molli
30 propter aquae rivum sub ramis arboris altae
non magnis opibus iucunde corpora curant,
praesertim cum tempestas adridet et anni
tempora conspergunt viridantis floribus herbas.
nec calidae citius decedunt corpore febres,
35 textilibus si in picturis ostroque rubenti
iacteris, quam si in plebeia veste cubandum est.
quapropter quoniam nihil nostro in corpore gazae
proficiunt neque nobilitas nec gloria regni,
quod super est, animo quoque nil prodesse putandum;
40 si non forte tuas legiones per loca campi
fervere cum videas belli simulacra cientis,

subsidiiis magnis et opum vi constabilitas,
ornatas armis stultas pariterque animatas,
his tibi tum rebus timefactae religiones
45 effugiunt animo pavidae mortisque timores
tum vacuum pectus lincunt curaque solutum.
quod si ridicula haec ludibriaque esse videmus,
re veraque metus hominum curaeque sequaces
nec metuunt sonitus armorum nec fera tela
50 audacterque inter reges rerumque potentis
versantur neque fulgorem reverentur ab auro
nec clarum vestis splendorem purpureai,
quid dubitas quin omnis sit haec rationis potestas,
omnis cum in tenebris praesertim vita laboret?
55 nam vel uti pueri trepidant atque omnia caecis
in tenebris metuunt, sic nos in luce timemus
inter dum, nihilo quae sunt metuenda magis quam
quae pueri in tenebris pavitant finguntque futura.
hunc igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque necessest
60 non radii solis neque lucida tela diei
discutiant, sed naturae species ratioque.
Nunc age, quo motu genitalia materiai
corpora res varias gignant genitasque resolvant
et qua vi facere id cogantur quaeque sit ollis
65 reddita mobilitas magnum per inane meandi,
expediam: tu te dictis praebere memento.
nam certe non inter se stipata cohaeret
materies, quoniam minui rem quamque videmus
et quasi longinquo fluere omnia cernimus aevo
70 ex oculisque vetustatem subducere nostris,
cum tamen incolumis videatur summa manere
propterea quia, quae decedunt corpora cuique,
unde abeunt minuunt, quo venere augmine donant.
illa senescere, at haec contra florescere cogunt,
75 nec remorantur ibi. sic rerum summa novatur
semper, et inter se mortales mutua vivunt.
augescunt aliae gentes, aliae minuuntur,
inque brevi spatio mutantur saecula animantium
et quasi cursores vitae lampada tradunt.
80 Si cessare putas rerum primordia posse
cessandoque novos rerum progignere motus,
avius a vera longe ratione vagaris.
nam quoniam per inane vagantur, cuncta necessest
aut gravitate sua ferri primordia rerum
85 aut ictu forte alterius. nam cum cita saepe

obvia confluxere, fit ut diversa repente
dissiliant; neque enim mirum, durissima quae sint
ponderibus solidis neque quicquam a tergibus obstet.
et quo iactari magis omnia materiai

90 corpora pervideas, reminiscere totius imum
nil esse in summa, neque habere ubi corpora prima
consistant, quoniam spatium sine fine modoquest
immensumque patere in cunctas undique partis
pluribus ostendi et certa ratione probatumst.

95 quod quoniam constat, ni mirum nulla quies est
reddita corporibus primis per inane profundum,
sed magis adsiduo varioque exercita motu
partim intervallis magnis confulta resultant,
pars etiam brevibus spatiis vexantur ab ictu.

100 et quae cumque magis condenso conciliatu
exiguus intervallis convecta resultant,
indupedita suis perplexis ipsa figuris,
haec validas saxi radices et fera ferri
corpora constituunt et cetera de genere horum.

105 paucula quae porro magnum per inane vagantur,
cetera dissiliunt longe longeque recursant
in magnis intervallis; haec aera rarum
sufficiunt nobis et splendida lumina solis.

multaque praeterea magnum per inane vagantur,
110 conciliis rerum quae sunt reiecta nec usquam
consociare etiam motus potuere recepta.

Cuius, uti memoro, rei simulacrum et imago
ante oculos semper nobis versatur et instat.
contemplator enim, cum solis lumina cumque

115 inserti fundunt radii per opaca domorum:
multa minuta modis multis per inane videbis
corpora misceri radiorum lumine in ipso
et vel ut aeterno certamine proelia pugnas
edere turmatim certantia nec dare pausam,

120 conciliis et discidiis exercita crebris;
conicere ut possis ex hoc, primordia rerum
quale sit in magno iactari semper inani.
dum taxat, rerum magnarum parva potest res
exemplare dare et vestigia notitiae.

125 Hoc etiam magis haec animum te advertere par est
corpora quae in solis radiis turbare videntur,
quod tales turbae motus quoque materiai
significant clandestinos caecosque subesse.
multa videbis enim plagis ibi percita caecis

130 commutare viam retroque repulsa reverti
nunc huc nunc illuc in cunctas undique partis.
scilicet hic a principiis est omnibus error.
prima moventur enim per se primordia rerum,
inde ea quae parvo sunt corpora conciliatu
135 et quasi proxima sunt ad viris principiorum,
ictibus illorum caecis impulsa cientur,
ipsaque proporro paulo maiora lacesunt.
sic a principiis ascendit motus et exit
paulatim nostros ad sensus, ut moveantur
140 illa quoque, in solis quae lumine cernere quimus
nec quibus id faciant plagis apparet aperte.
Nunc quae mobilitas sit reddita materiai
corporibus, paucis licet hinc cognoscere, Memmi.
primum aurora novo cum spargit lumine terras
145 et variae volucres nemora avia pervolitantes
aera per tenerum liquidis loca vocibus opplent,
quam subito soleat sol ortus tempore tali
convestire sua perfundens omnia luce,
omnibus in promptu manifestumque esse videmus.
150 at vapor is, quem sol mittit, lumenque serenum
non per inane meat vacuum; quo tardius ire
cogitur, aerias quasi dum diverberat undas;
nec singillatim corpuscula quaeque vaporis
sed complexa meant inter se conque globata;
155 qua propter simul inter se retrahuntur et extra
officiuntur, uti cogantur tardius ire.
at quae sunt solida primordia simplicitate,
cum per inane meant vacuum nec res remoratur
ulla foris atque ipsa suis e partibus unum,
160 unum, in quem coepere, locum conixa feruntur,
debent ni mirum praecellere mobilitate
et multo citius ferri quam lumina solis
multiplexque loci spatium transcurrere eodem
tempore quo solis pervolgant fulgura caelum.

* * *

nec persectari primordia singula quaeque,
ut videant qua quicque geratur cum ratione.
At quidam contra haec, ignari materiai,
naturam non posse deum sine numine reddunt
tanto opere humanis rationibus atmoderate
170 tempora mutare annorum frugesque creare
et iam cetera, mortalis quae suadet adire

ipsaque deducit dux vitae dia voluptas
et res per Veneris blanditur saecula propagent,
ne genus occidat humanum. quorum omnia causa
175 constituisse deos cum fingunt, omnibus rebus
magno opere a vera lapsi ratione videntur.
nam quamvis rerum ignorem primordia quae sint,
hoc tamen ex ipsis caeli rationibus ausim
confirmare aliisque ex rebus reddere multis,
180 nequaquam nobis divinitus esse creatam
naturam mundi: tanta stat praedita culpa.
quae tibi posterius, Memmi, faciemus aperta;
nunc id quod super est de motibus expediemus.
Nunc locus est, ut opinor, in his illud quoque rebus
185 confirmare tibi, nullam rem posse sua vi
corpoream sursum ferri sursumque meare.
ne tibi dent in eo flammaram corpora frudem;
sursus enim versus gignuntur et augmina sumunt
et sursum nitidae fruges arbustaque crescunt,
190 pondera, quantum in se est, cum deorsum cuncta ferantur.
nec cum subsiliunt ignes ad tecta domorum
et celeri flamma degustant tigna trabesque,
sponte sua facere id sine vi subiecta putandum est.
quod genus e nostro com missus corpore sanguis
195 emicat exultans alte spargitque cruorem.
nonne vides etiam quanta vi tigna trabesque
respuat umor aquae? nam quo magis ursimus altum
directa et magna vi multi pressimus aegre,
tam cupide sursum removet magis atque remittit,
200 plus ut parte foras emergant exilientque.
nec tamen haec, quantum est in se, dubitamus, opinor,
quin vacuum per inane deorsum cuncta ferantur.
sic igitur debent flammae quoque posse per auras
aeris expressae sursum succedere, quamquam
205 pondera, quantum in se est, deorsum deducere pugnent.
nocturnasque faces caeli sublime volantis
nonne vides longos flammaram ducere tractus
in quas cumque dedit partis natura meatum?
non cadere in terras stellas et sidera cernis?
210 sol etiam caeli de vertice dissipat omnis
ardorem in partis et lumine conserit arva;
in terras igitur quoque solis vergitur ardor.
transversosque volare per imbris fulmina cernis,
nunc hinc nunc illinc abrupti nubibus ignes
215 concursant; cadit in terras vis flammea volgo.

Illud in his quoque te rebus cognoscere avemus,
corpora cum deorsum rectum per inane feruntur
ponderibus propriis, incerto tempore ferme
incertisque locis spatio depellere paulum,
220 tantum quod momen mutatum dicere possis.
quod nisi declinare solerent, omnia deorsum
imbris uti guttae caderent per inane profundum
nec foret offensus natus nec plaga creata
principiis; ita nihil umquam natura creasset.
225 Quod si forte aliquis credit graviora potesse
corpora, quo citius rectum per inane feruntur,
incidere ex supero levioribus atque ita plagas
gignere, quae possint genitalis reddere motus,
avius a vera longe ratione recedit.
230 nam per aquas quae cumque cadunt atque aera rarum,
haec pro ponderibus casus celerare necessest
propterea quia corpus aquae naturaque tenuis
aeris haud possunt aequae rem quamque morari,
sed citius cedunt gravioribus exsuperata;
235 at contra nulli de nulla parte neque ullo
tempore inane potest vacuum subsistere rei,
quin, sua quod natura petit, concedere pergat;
omnia qua propter debent per inane quietum
aeque ponderibus non aequis concita ferri.
240 haud igitur poterunt levioribus incidere umquam
ex supero graviora neque ictus gignere per se,
qui varient motus, per quos natura gerat res.
quare etiam atque etiam paulum inclinare necessest
corpora; nec plus quam minimum, ne fingere motus
245 obliquos videamur et id res vera refutet.
namque hoc in promptu manifestumque esse videmus,
pondera, quantum in se est, non posse obliqua meare,
ex supero cum praecipitant, quod cernere possis;
sed nihil omnino recta regione viai
250 declinare quis est qui possit cernere sese?
Denique si semper motu conecitur omnis
et vetere exoritur motus novus ordine certo
nec declinando faciunt primordia motus
principium quoddam, quod fati foedera rumpat,
255 ex infinito ne causam causa sequatur,
libera per terras unde haec animantibus exstat,
unde est haec, inquam, fatis avolsa voluntas,
per quam progredimur quo ducit quemque voluptas,
declinamus item motus nec tempore certo

260 nec regione loci certa, sed ubi ipsa tulit mens?
nam dubio procul his rebus sua cuique voluntas
principium dat et hinc motus per membra rigantur.
nonne vides etiam patefactis tempore puncto
carceribus non posse tamen prorumpere equorum
265 vim cupidam tam de subito quam mens avet ipsa?
omnis enim totum per corpus materiai
copia conciri debet, concita per artus
omnis ut studium mentis conixa sequatur;
ut videas initum motus a corde creari
270 ex animique voluntate id procedere primum,
inde dari porro per totum corpus et artus.
nec similest ut cum impulsus procedimus ictu
viribus alterius magnis magnoque coactu;
nam tum materiem totius corporis omnem
275 perspicuumst nobis invitis ire rapique,
donec eam refrenavit per membra voluntas.
iamne vides igitur, quamquam vis externa multos
pellat et invitos cogat procedere saepe
praecipitesque rapi, tamen esse in pectore nostro
280 quiddam quod contra pugnare obstareque possit?
cuius ad arbitrium quoque copia materiai
cogitur inter dum flecti per membra per artus
et proiecta refrenatur retroque residit.
quare in seminibus quoque idem fateare necessest,
285 esse aliam praeter plagas et pondera causam
motibus, unde haec est nobis innata potestas,
de nihilo quoniam fieri nihil posse videmus.
pondus enim prohibet ne plagis omnia fiant
externa quasi vi; sed ne res ipsa necessum
290 intestinum habeat cunctis in rebus agendis
et devicta quasi cogatur ferre patique,
id facit exiguum clinamen principiorum
nec regione loci certa nec tempore certo.
Nec stipata magis fuit umquam materiai
295 copia nec porro maioribus intervallis;
nam neque adaugescit quicquam neque deperit inde.
qua propter quo nunc in motu principiorum
corpora sunt, in eodem ante acta aetate fuere
et post haec semper simili ratione ferentur,
300 et quae consuerint gigni gignentur eadem
condicione et erunt et crescent vique valebunt,
quantum cuique datum est per foedera naturai.
nec rerum summam commutare ulla potest vis;

nam neque quo possit genus ullum material
305 effugere ex omni quicquam est extra, neque in omne
unde coorta queat nova vis inrumpere et omnem
naturam rerum mutare et vertere motus.
Illud in his rebus non est mirabile, quare,
omnia cum rerum primordia sint in motu,
310 summa tamen summa videatur stare quiete,
praeter quam siquid proprio dat corpore motus.
omnis enim longe nostris ab sensibus infra
primorum natura iacet; qua propter, ubi ipsa
cernere iam nequeas, motus quoque surpere debent;
315 praesertim cum, quae possimus cernere, celent
saepe tamen motus spatio diducta locorum.
nam saepe in colli tondentes pabula laeta
lanigeræ reptant pecudes, quo quamque vocantes
invitant herbae gemmantes rore recenti,
320 et satiati agni ludunt blandeque coruscant;
omnia quae nobis longe confusa videntur
et velut in viridi candor consistere colli.
praeterea magnae legiones cum loca cursu
camporum complent belli simulacra cientes,
325 fulgor ubi ad caelum se tollit totaque circum
aere renidescit tellus supterque virum vi
excitur pedibus sonitus clamoreque montes
icti reiectant voces ad sidera mundi
et circum volitant equites mediosque repente
330 tramittunt valido quatientes impete campos;
et tamen est quidam locus altis montibus, unde
stare videntur et in campis consistere fulgor.
Nunc age, iam deinceps cunctarum exordia rerum
qualia sint et quam longe distantia formis,
335 percipe, multigenis quam sint variata figuris;
non quo multa parum simili sint praedita forma,
sed quia non volgo paria omnibus omnia constant.
nec mirum; nam cum sit eorum copia tanta,
ut neque finis, uti docui, neque summa sit ulla,
340 debent ni mirum non omnibus omnia prorsum
esse pari filo similique adfecta figura.
Praeterea genus humanum mutaeque natantes
squamigerum pecudes et laeta armenta feraeque
et variae volucres, laetantia quae loca aquarum
345 concelebrant circum ripas fontisque lacusque,
et quae pervolgant nemora avia pervolitantes,
quorum unum quidvis generatim sumere perge;

invenies tamen inter se differre figuris.
nec ratione alia proles cognoscere matrem
350 nec mater posset prolem; quod posse videmus
nec minus atque homines inter se nota cluere.
nam saepe ante deum vitulus delubra decora
turicremas propter mactatus concidit aras
sanguinis expirans calidum de pectore flumen;
355 at mater viridis saltus orbata peragrans
novit humi pedibus vestigia pressa bisulcis,
omnia convisens oculis loca, si queat usquam
conspicere amissum fetum, completque querellis
frondiferum nemus adsistens et crebra revisit
360 ad stabulum desiderio perfixa iuvenci,
nec tenerae salices atque herbae rore vigentes
fluminaque ulla queunt summis labentia ripis
oblectare animum subitamque avertere curam,
nec vitulorum aliae species per pabula laeta
365 derivare queunt animum curaque levare;
usque adeo quiddam proprium notumque requirit.
praeterea teneri tremulis cum vocibus haedi
cornigeras norunt matres agnique petulci
balantum pecudes; ita, quod natura respocit,
370 ad sua quisque fere decurrunt ubera lactis.
Postremo quodvis frumentum non tamen omne
quidque suo genere inter se simile esse videbis,
quin intercurrat quaedam distantia formis.
concharumque genus parili ratione videmus
375 pingere telluris gremium, qua mollibus undis
litoris incurvi bibulam pavit aequor harenam.
quare etiam atque etiam simili ratione necessest,
natura quoniam constant neque facta manu sunt
unius ad certam formam primordia rerum,
380 dissimili inter se quaedam volitare figura.
Perfacile est animi ratione exsolvere nobis
quare fulmineus multo penetratior ignis
quam noster fluat e taedis terrestribus ortus;
dicere enim possis caelestem fulminis ignem
385 subtilem magis e parvis constare figuris
atque ideo transire foramina quae nequit ignis
noster hic e lignis ortus taedaque creatus.
praeterea lumen per cornum transit, at imber
respuitur. quare, nisi luminis illa minora
390 corpora sunt quam de quibus est liquor almus aquarum?
et quamvis subito per colum vina videmus

perfluere, at contra tardum cunctatur olivom,
aut quia ni mirum maioribus est elementis
aut magis hamatis inter se perque plicatis,
395 atque ideo fit uti non tam diducta repente
inter se possint primordia singula quaeque
singula per cuiusque foramina permanare.
Huc accedit uti mellis lactisque liquores
iucundo sensu linguae tractentur in ore;
400 at contra taetra absinthi natura ferique
centauri foedo pertorquent ora sapore;
ut facile agnoscas e levibus atque rutundis
esse ea quae sensus iucunde tangere possunt,
at contra quae amara atque aspera cumque videntur,
405 haec magis hamatis inter se nexa teneri
proptereaue solere vias rescindere nostris
sensibus introituque suo perrumpere corpus.
omnia postremo bona sensibus et mala tactu
dissimili inter se pugnant perfecta figura;
410 ne tu forte putes serrae stridentis acerbum
horrorem constare elementis levibus aequae
ac musaea mele, per chordas organici quae
mobilibus digitis expergefata figurant;
neu simili penetrare putes primordia forma
415 in nares hominum, cum taetra cadavera torrent,
et cum scena croco Cilici perfusa recens est
araque Panchaeos exhalat propter odores;
neve bonos rerum simili constare colores
semine constituas, oculos qui pascere possunt,
420 et qui compungunt aciem lacrimareque cogunt
aut foeda specie foedi turpesque videntur.
omnis enim, sensus quae mulcet cumque, tibi res
haut sine principali aliquo levore creatast;
at contra quae cumque molesta atque aspera constat,
425 non aliquo sine materiae squalore repertast.
Sunt etiam quae iam nec levia iure putantur
esse neque omnino flexis mucronibus unca,
sed magis angellis paulum prostantibus, ut quae
titillare magis sensus quam laedere possint,
430 fecula iam quo de genere est inulaeque sapes.
Denique iam calidos ignis gelidamque pruina
dissimili dentata modo compungere sensus
corporis, indicio nobis est tactus uterque.
tactus enim, tactus, pro divum numina sancta,
435 corporis est sensus, vel cum res extera sese

insinuat, vel cum laedit quae in corpore natatast
aut iuvat egrediens genitalis per Veneris res,
aut ex offensus cum turbant corpore in ipso,
semina confundunt inter se concita sensum;
440 ut si forte manu quamvis iam corporis ipse
tute tibi partem ferias atque experiare.
qua propter longe formas distare necessest
principiis, varios quae possint edere sensus.
Denique quae nobis durata ac spissa videntur,
445 haec magis hamatis inter sese esse necessest
et quasi ramosis alte compacta teneri.
in quo iam genere in primis adamantina saxa
prima acie constant ictus contemnere sueta
et validi silices ac duri robora ferri
450 aeraque quae claustris restantia vociferantur.
illa quidem debent e levibus atque rutundis
esse magis, fluvido quae corpore liquida constant.
namque papaveris haustus itemst facilis quod aquarum;
nec retinentur enim inter se glomeramina quaeque
455 et percussus item proclive volubilis exstat.
omnia postremo quae puncto tempore cernis
diffugere ut fumum nebulas flammasque, necessest,
si minus omnia sunt e levibus atque rotundis,
at non esse tamen perplexis indupedita,
460 pungere uti possint corpus penetrareque saxa,
nec tamen haerere inter se; quod cumque videmus
sensibus dentatum, facile ut cognoscere possis
non e perplexis, sed acutis esse elementis.
sed quod amara vides eadem quae fluvida constant,
465 sudor uti maris est, minime mirabile debet

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nam quod fluvidus est, e levibus atque rotundis
est, sed levibus sunt hamata admixta doloris
corpora. nec tamen haec retineri hamata necessust:
scilicet esse globosa tamen, cum squalida constant,
470 provolvi simul ut possint et laedere sensus.
et quo mixta putes magis aspera levibus esse
principiis, unde est Neptuni corpus acerbum,
est ratio secernendi seorsumque videndi,
umor dulcis ubi per terras crebrius idem
475 percolatur, ut in foveam fluat ac mansuescat;
linquit enim supera taetri primordia viri,
aspera quo magis in terris haerescere possint.

Quod quoniam docui, pergam conectere rem quae
ex hoc apta fidem ducat, primordia rerum

480 finita variare figurarum ratione.

quod si non ita sit, rursum iam semina quaedam
esse infinito debebunt corporis auctu.

namque in eadem una cuiusvis iam brevitate
corporis inter se multum variare figurae

485 non possunt. fac enim minimis e partibus esse

corpora prima tribus, vel paulo pluribus auge;

nempe ubi eas partis unius corporis omnis,

summa atque ima locans, transmutans dextera laevis,

omnimodis expertus eris, quam quisque det ordo

490 formai speciem totius corporis eius,

quod super est, si forte voles variare figuras,

addendum partis alias erit. inde sequetur,

adsimili ratione alias ut postulet ordo,

si tu forte voles etiam variare figuras.

495 ergo formarum novitatem corporis augmen

subsequitur. quare non est ut credere possis

esse infinitis distantia semina formis,

ne quaedam cogas inmani maximitate

esse, supra quod iam docui non posse probari.

500 iam tibi barbaricae vestes Meliboeaque fulgens

purpura Thessalico concharum tacta colore,

aurea pavonum ridenti imbuta lepore

saecla novo rerum superata colore iacerent

et contemptus odor smyrnae mellisque saporis,

505 et cycnea mele Phoebeaque daedala chordis

carmina consimili ratione oppressa silerent;

namque aliis aliud praestantius exoreretur.

cedere item retro possent in deteriores

omnia sic partis, ut diximus in melioris;

510 namque aliis aliud retro quoque taetrius esset

naribus auribus atque oculis orisque saporis.

quae quoniam non sunt, sed rebus reddita certa

finis utrimque tenet summam, fateare necessest

materiem quoque finitis differe figuris.

515 denique ab ignibus ad gelidas hiemum usque pruinas

finitumst retroque pari ratione remensumst.

omnis enim calor ac frigus medique tepores

interutrasque iacent explentes ordine summam.

ergo finita distant ratione creata,

520 ancipiti quoniam mucroni utrimque notantur,

hinc flammis illinc rigidis infesta pruinis.

Quod quoniam docui, pergam conectere rem quae
ex hoc apta fidem ducat, primordia rerum,
inter se simili quae sunt perfecta figura,
525 infinita cluere. etenim distantia cum sit
formarum finita, necesse est quae similes sint
esse infinitas aut summam materiai
finitam constare, id quod non esse probavi.

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versibus ostendam corpuscula materiai
ex infinito summam rerum usque tenere
undique protelo plagarum continuato.
nam quod rara vides magis esse animalia quaedam
fecundamque magis naturam cernis in illis,
at regione locoque alio terrisque remotis
535 multa licet genere esse in eo numerumque repleri;
sicut quadripedum cum primis esse videmus
in genere anguimanus elephantos, India quorum
milibus e multis vallo munitur eburno,
ut penitus nequeat penetrari: tanta ferarum
540 vis est, quarum nos perpauca exempla videmus.
sed tamen id quoque uti concedam, quam lubet esto
unica res quaedem nativo corpore sola,
cui similis toto terrarum non sit, in orbi;
infinita tamen nisi erit vis materiai,
545 unde ea progigni possit concepta, creati
non poterit neque, quod super est, procreescere alicue.
quippe etenim sumant alii finita per omne
corpora iactari unius genitalia rei,
unde ubi qua vi et quo pacto congressa coibunt
550 materiae tanto in pelago turbaque aliena?
non, ut opinor, habent rationem conciliandi:
sed quasi naufragiis magnis multisque coortis
disiactare solet magnum mare transtra cavernas
antennas prorem malos tonsasque natantis,
555 per terrarum omnis oras fluitantia aplustra
ut videantur et indicium mortalibus edant,
infidi maris insidias virisque dolumque
ut vitare velint, neve ullo tempore credant,
subdola cum ridet placidi pellacia ponti,
560 sic tibi si finita semel primordia quaedam
constitues, aevom debebunt sparsa per omnem
disiectare aestus diversi materiai,
numquam in concilium ut possint compulsa coire

nec remorari in concilio nec crescere adaucta;
565 quorum utrumque palam fieri manifesta docet res,
et res progigni et genitas procreare posse.
esse igitur genere in quovis primordia rerum
infinita palam est, unde omnia suppeditantur.
Nec superare queunt motus itaque exitiales
570 perpetuo neque in aeternum sepelire salutem,
nec porro rerum genitales auctificique
motus perpetuo possunt servare creata.
sic aequo geritur certamine principiorum
ex infinito contractum tempore bellum.
575 nunc hic nunc illic superant vitalia rerum
et superantur item. miscetur funere vago,
quem pueri tollunt visentis luminis oras;
nec nox ulla diem neque noctem aurora secutast,
quae non audierit mixtos vagitibus aegris
580 ploratus, mortis comites et funeris atri.
Illud in his obsignatum quoque rebus habere
convenit et memori mandatum mente tenere,
nil esse, in promptu quorum natura videtur,
quod genere ex uno consistat principiorum,
585 nec quicquam quod non permixto semine constet.
et quod cumque magis vis multas possidet in se
atque potestates, ita plurima principiorum
in sese genera ac varias docet esse figuras.
Principio tellus habet in se corpora prima,
590 unde mare inmensum volventes frigora fontes
adsidue renovent, habet ignes unde oriantur;
nam multis succensa locis ardent sola terrae,
ex imis vero furit ignibus impetus Aetnae.
tum porro nitidas fruges arbustaque laeta
595 gentibus humanis habet unde extollere possit,
unde etiam fluvios frondes et pabula laeta
montivago generi possit praebere ferarum.
quare magna deum mater materque ferarum
et nostri genetrix haec dicta est corporis una.
600 Hanc veteres Graium docti cecinere poetae
sedibus in curru biiugos agitare leones,
aeris in spatio magnam pendere docentes
tellurem neque posse in terra sistere terram.
adiungere feras, quia quamvis effera proles
605 officiis debet molliri victa parentum.
muralique caput summum cinxere corona,
eximiis munita locis quia sustinet urbes.

quo nunc insigni per magnas praedita terras
horrifice fertur divinae matris imago.

610 hanc variae gentes antiquo more sacrorum
Idaeam vocitant matrem Phrygiasque catervas
dant comites, quia primum ex illis finibus edunt
per terrarum orbis fruges coepisse creari.

Gallos attribuunt, quia, numen qui violarint

615 Matris et ingrati genitoribus inventi sint,
significare volunt indignos esse putandos,
vivam progeniem qui in oras luminis edant.

tympana tenta tonant palmis et cymbala circum
concava, raucisonoque minantur cornua cantu,

620 et Phrygio stimulat numero cava tibia mentis,
telaque praeportant, violenti signa furoris,
ingratos animos atque impia pectora volgi
conterrere metu quae possint numine divae.

ergo cum primum magnas invecta per urbis

625 munificat tacita mortalis muta salute,
aere atque argento sternunt iter omne viarum
largifica stipe ditantes ninguntque rosarum

floribus umbrantes matrem comitumque catervam.
hic armata manus, Curetas nomine Grai

630 quos memorant, Phrygias inter si forte catervas
ludunt in numerumque exultant sanguine laeti
terrificas capitum quatientes numine cristas,

Dictaeos referunt Curetas, qui Iovis illum
vagitum in Creta quondam occultasse feruntur,

635 cum pueri circum puerum pernice chorea
armat et in numerum pernice chorea
armati in numerum pulsarent aeribus aera,

ne Saturnus eum malis mandaret adeptus
aeternumque daret matri sub pectore volnus.

640 propterea magnam armati matrem comitantur,
aut quia significant divam praedicere ut armis
ac virtute velint patriam defendere terram

praesidioque parent decorique parentibus esse.
quae bene et eximie quamvis disposta ferantur,

645 longe sunt tamen a vera ratione repulsa.
omnis enim per se divom natura necessest
inmortali aevo summa cum pace fruatur

semota ab nostris rebus seiunctaque longe;
nam privata dolore omni, privata periclis,

650 ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri,
nec bene promeritis capitur neque tangitur ira.

terra quidem vero caret omni tempore sensu,
et quia multarum potitur primordia rerum,
multa modis multis effert in lumina solis.

655 hic siquis mare Neptunum Cereremque vocare
constituet fruges et Bacchi nomine abuti
mavolt quam laticis proprium proferre vocamen,
concedamus ut hic terrarum dictitet orbem
esse deum matrem, dum vera re tamen ipse

660 religione animum turpi contingere parcat.
Saepe itaque ex uno tondentes gramina campo
lanigerae pecudes et equorum duellica proles
buceriaeque greges eodem sub tegmine caeli
ex unoque sitim sedantes flumine aquai
dissimili vivont specie retinentque parentum

665 naturam et mores generatim quaeque imitantur.
tanta est in quovis genere herbae materiai
dissimilis ratio, tanta est in flumine quoque.
Hinc porro quamvis animantem ex omnibus unam
ossa cruor venae calor umor viscera nervi

670 constituunt, quae sunt porro distantia longe,
dissimili perfecta figura principiorum.
Tum porro quae cumque igni flammata cremantur.
si nil praeterea, tamen haec in corpore tradunt,
unde ignem iacere et lumen submittere possint

675 scintillasque agere ac late differre favillam.
cetera consimili mentis ratione peragrans
invenies igitur multarum semina rerum
corpore celare et varias cohibere figuras.
Denique multa vides, quibus et color et sapor una
reddita sunt cum odore in primis pleraque poma.
haec igitur variis debent constare figuris;
nidor enim penetrat qua fucus non it in artus,
fucus item sorsum, sorsum sapor insinuat

685 sensibus; ut noscas primis differre figuris.
dissimiles igitur formae glomeramen in unum
conveniunt et res permixto semine constant.
Quin etiam passim nostris in versibus ipsis
multa elementa vides multis communia verbis,

690 cum tamen inter se versus ac verba necesse est
confiteare alia ex aliis constare elementis;
non quo multa parum communis littera currat
aut nulla inter se duo sint ex omnibus isdem,
sed quia non volgo paria omnibus omnia constant.

695 sic aliis in rebus item communia multa

multarum rerum cum sint, primordia rerum
dissimili tamen inter se consistere summa
possunt; ut merito ex aliis constare feratur
humanum genus et fruges arbustaque laeta.

700 Nec tamen omnimodis conecti posse putandum est
omnia; nam volgo fieri portenta videres,
semiferas hominum species existere et altos
inter dum ramos eigni corpore vivo
multaque conecti terrestria membra marinis,
705 tum flammam taetro spirantis ore Chimaeras
pascere naturam per terras omniparentis.
quorum nil fieri manifestum est, omnia quando
seminibus certis certa genetrice creata
conservare genus crescentia posse videmus.

710 scilicet id certa fieri ratione necessust.
nam sua cuique cibus ex omnibus intus in artus
corpora discedunt conexaque convenientis
efficiunt motus; at contra aliena videmus
reicere in terras naturam, multaque caecis
715 corporibus fugiunt e corpore percita plagis,
quae neque conecti quoquam potuere neque intus
vitalis motus consentire atque imitari.
sed ne forte putes animalia sola teneri
legibus his, quaedam ratio res terminat omnis

720 nam vel uti tota natura dissimiles sunt
inter se genitae res quaeque, ita quamque necessest
dissimili constare figura principiorum;
non quo multa parum simili sint praedita forma,
sed quia non volgo paria omnibus omnia constant.

725 semina cum porro distent, differre necessust
intervalla vias conexus pondera plagas
concursum motus; quae non animalia solum
corpora seiungunt, sed terras ac mare totum
secernunt caelumque a terris omne retentant.

730 Nunc age dicta meo dulci quaesita labore
percipe, ne forte haec albis ex alba rearis
principiis esse, ante oculos quae candida cernis,
aut ea quae nigrant nigro de semine nata;
nive alium quemvis quae sunt inbuta colorem,
735 propterea gerere hunc credas, quod materiai
corpora consimili sint eius tincta colore;
nullus enim color est omnino materiai
corporibus, neque par rebus neque denique dispar.
in quae corpora si nullus tibi forte videtur

740 posse animi iniectus fieri, procul avius erras.
nam cum caecigeni, solis qui lumina numquam
dispexere, tamen cognoscant corpora tactu
ex ineunte aevo nullo coniuncta colore,
scire licet nostrae quoque menti corpora posse
745 vorti in notitiam nullo circum lita fuco.
denique nos ipsi caecis quaecumque tenebris
tangimus, haud ullo sentimus tincta colore.
Quod quoniam vinco fieri, nunc esse docebo.
omnis enim color omnino mutatur in omnis;
750 quod facere haud ullo debent primordia pacto;
immutabile enim quiddam superare necessest,
ne res ad nihilum redigantur funditus omnes;
nam quod cumque suis mutatum finibus exit,
continuo hoc mors est illius quod fuit ante.
755 proinde colore cave contingas semina rerum,
ne tibi res redeant ad nihilum funditus omnes.
Praeterea si nulla coloris principiis est
reddita natura et variis sunt praedita formis,
e quibus omnigenus gignunt variantque colores,
760 propterea magni quod refert, semina quaeque
cum quibus et quali positura contineantur
et quos inter se dent motus accipiantque,
perfacile extemplo rationem reddere possis,
cur ea quae nigro fuerint paulo ante colore,
765 marmoreo fieri possint candore repente,
ut mare, cum magni commorunt aequora venti,
vertitur in canos candenti marmore fluctus;
dicere enim possis, nigrum quod saepe videmus,
materies ubi permixta est illius et ordo
770 principiis mutatus et addita demptaque quaedam,
continuo id fieri ut candens videatur et album.
quod si caeruleis constarent aequora ponti
seminibus, nullo possent albescere pacto;
nam quo cumque modo perturbes caerulea quae sint,
775 numquam in marmoreum possunt migrare colorem.
sin alio atque alio sunt semina tincta colore,
quae maris efficiunt unum purumque nitorem,
ut saepe ex aliis formis variisque figuris
efficitur quiddam quadratum unaque figura,
780 conveniebat, ut in quadrato cernimus esse
dissimiles formas, ita cernere in aequore ponti
aut alio in quovis uno puroque nitore
dissimiles longe inter se variosque colores.

praeterea nihil efficiunt obstantque figurae
785 dissimiles, quo quadratum minus omne sit extra;
at varii rerum inpediunt prohibentque colores,
quo minus esse uno possit res tota nitore.
Tum porro quae ducit et inlicit ut tribuamus
principiis rerum non numquam causa colores,
790 occidit, ex albis quoniam non alba creantur,
nec quae nigra cluent de nigris, sed variis ex.
quippe etenim multo proclivius exorientur
candida de nullo quam nigro nata colore
aut alio quovis, qui contra pugnet et obstet.
795 Praeterea quoniam nequeunt sine luce colores
esse neque in lucem existunt primordia rerum,
scire licet quam sint nullo velata colore;
qualis enim caecis poterit color esse tenebris?
lumine quin ipso mutatur propterea quod
800 recta aut obliqua percussus luce refulget;
pluma columbarum quo pacto in sole videtur,
quae sita cervices circum collumque coronat;
namque alias fit uti claro sit rubra pyropo,
inter dum quodam sensu fit uti videatur
805 inter caeruleum viridis miscere zmaragdus.
caudaque pavonis, larga cum luce repleta est,
consimili mutat ratione obversa colores;
qui quoniam quodam gignuntur luminis ictu,
scire licet, sine eo fieri non posse putandum est.
810 Et quoniam plagae quoddam genus excipit in se
pupula, cum sentire colorem dicitur album,
atque aliud porro, nigrum cum et cetera sentit,
nec refert ea quae tangas quo forte colore
praedita sint, verum quali magis apta figura,
815 scire licet nihil principiis opus esse colore,
sed variis formis variantes edere tactus.
Praeterea quoniam non certis certa figuris
est natura coloris et omnia principiorum
formamenta queunt in quovis esse nitore,
820 cur ea quae constant ex illis non pariter sunt
omnigenus perfusa coloribus in genere omni?
conveniebat enim corvos quoque saepe volantis
ex albis album pinnis iactare colorem
et nigros fieri nigro de semine cycnos
825 aut alio quovis uno varioque colore.
Quin etiam quanto in partes res quaeque minutas
distrahitur magis, hoc magis est ut cernere possis

evanescere paulatim stinguique colorem;
ut fit ubi in parvas partis discerpitur austrum:
830 purpura poeniceusque color clarissimus multo,
filatim cum distractum est, disperditur omnis;
noscere ut hinc possis prius omnem efflare colorem
particulas, quam discedant ad semina rerum.
Postremo quoniam non omnia corpora vocem
835 mittere concedis neque odorem, propterea fit
ut non omnibus adtribuas sonitus et odores:
sic oculis quoniam non omnia cernere quimus,
scire licet quaedam tam constare orba colore
quam sine odore ullo quaedam sonituque remota,
840 nec minus haec animum cognoscere posse sagacem
quam quae sunt aliis rebus privata notare.
Sed ne forte putes solo spoliata colore
corpora prima manere, etiam secreta teporis
sunt ac frigoris omnino calidique vaporis,
845 et sonitu sterila et suco ieiuna feruntur,
nec iaciunt ullum proprium de corpore odorem.
sicut amaracini blandum stactaeque liquorem
et nardi florem, nectar qui naribus halat,
cum facere instituas, cum primis quaerere par est,
850 quod licet ac possis reperire, inolentis olivi
naturam, nullam quae mittat naribus auram,
quam minime ut possit mixtos in corpore odores
concoctosque suo contractans perdere viro,
propter eandem rem debent primordia rerum
855 non adhibere suum gignundis rebus odorem
nec sonitum, quoniam nihil ab se mittere possunt,
nec simili ratione saporem denique quemquam
nec frigus neque item calidum tepidumque vaporem,
cetera, quae cum ita sunt tamen ut mortalia constent,
860 molli lenta, fragosa putri, cava corpore raro,
omnia sint a principiis seiuncta necessest,
immortalia si volumus subiungere rebus
fundamenta, quibus nitatur summa salutis;
ne tibi res redeant ad nihilum funditus omnes.
865 Nunc ea quae sentire videmus cumque necessest
ex insensilibus tamen omnia confiteare
principiis constare. neque id manifesta refutant
nec contra pugnant, in promptu cognita quae sunt,
sed magis ipsa manu ducunt et credere cogunt
870 ex insensilibus, quod dico, animalia gigni.
quippe videre licet vivos existere vermes

stercore de taetro, putorem cum sibi nacta est
intempestivis ex imbribus umida tellus.

Praeterea cunctas itidem res vertere sese.

875 vertunt se fluvii in frondes et pabula laeta
in pecudes, vertunt pecudes in corpora nostra
naturam, et nostro de corpore saepe ferarum
augescunt vires et corpora pennipotentum.
ergo omnes natura cibos in corpora viva

880 vertit et hinc sensus animantium procreat omnes,
non alia longe ratione atque arida ligna
explicat in flammis et in ignis omnia versat.

iamne vides igitur magni primordia rerum
referre in quali sint ordine quaeque locata

885 et commixta quibus dent motus accipiantque?

Tum porro, quid id est, animum quod percutit, ipsum,
quod movet et varios sensus expromere cogit,
ex insensilibus ne credas sensile gigni?

ni mirum lapides et ligna et terra quod una

890 mixta tamen nequeunt vitalem reddere sensum.

illud in his igitur rebus meminisse decebit,

non ex omnibus omnino, quaecumque creant res

sensilia, extemplo me gigni dicere sensus,

sed magni referre ea primum quantula constant,

895 sensile quae faciunt, et qua sint praedita forma,

motibus ordinibus posituris denique quae sint.

quarum nil rerum in lignis glaebisque videmus;

et tamen haec, cum sunt quasi putrefacta per imbres,

vermiculos pariunt, quia corpora materialia

900 antiquis ex ordinibus permota nova re

conciliantur ita ut debent animalia gigni.

Deinde ex sensilibus qui sensile posse creari

constituunt, porro ex aliis sentire sueti

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mollia cum faciunt; nam sensus iungitur omnis
visceribus nervis venis, quae cumque videmus
mollia mortali consistere corpore creta.

sed tamen esto iam posse haec aeterna manere;

nempe tamen debent aut sensum partis habere

aut similis totis animalibus esse putari.

910 at nequeant per se partes sentire necesse est:

namque animus sensus membrorum respuit omnis,

nec manus a nobis potis est secreta neque ulla

corporis omnino sensum pars sola tenere.

linquitur ut totis animantibus adsimulentur,
915 vitali ut possint consentire undique sensu.
qui poterunt igitur rerum primordia dici
et leti vitare vias, animalia cum sint,
atque animalia sint mortalibus una eademque?
quod tamen ut possint, at coetu concilioque
920 nil facient praeter volgum turbamque animantum,
scilicet ut nequeant homines armenta feraeque
inter sese ullam rem gignere conveniundo.
sic itidem quae sentimus sentire necessest.
quod si forte suum dimittunt corpore sensum
925 atque alium capiunt, quid opus fuit adtribui id quod
detrahitur? tum praeterea, quod fudimus ante,
quatinus in pullos animalis vertier ova
cernimus alituum vermisque effervere terra,
intempestivos quam putor cepit ob imbris,
930 scire licet gigni posse ex non sensibus sensus.
Quod si forte aliquis dicet, dum taxat oriri
posse ex non sensu sensus mutabilitate,
aut aliquo tamquam partu quod proditur extra,
huic satis illud erit planum facere atque probare,
935 non fieri partum nisi concilio ante coacto,
nec quicquam commutari sine conciliatu.
Principio nequeunt ullius corporis esse
sensus ante ipsam genitam naturam animantis,
ni mirum quia materies disiecta tenetur
940 aere fluminibus terris terraque creatis,
nec congressa modo vitalis convenientes
contulit inter se motus, quibus omnituentes
accensi sensus animantem quamque tuentur.
Praeterea quamvis animantem grandior ictus,
945 quam patitur natura, repente adfligit et omnis
corporis atque animi pergit confundere sensus.
dissoluuntur enim positurae principiorum
et penitus motus vitales inpediuntur,
donec materies omnis concussa per artus
950 vitalis animae nodos a corpore solvit
dispersamque foras per caulas eiecit omnis;
nam quid praeterea facere ictum posse reamur
oblatum, nisi discutere ac dissolvere quaeque?
fit quoque uti soleant minus oblato acriter ictu
955 reliqui motus vitalis vincere saepe,
vincere et ingentis plagae sedare tumultus
inque suos quicquid rursus revocare meatus

et quasi iam leti dominantem in corpore motum
discutere ac paene amissos accendere sensus;
960 nam qua re potius leti iam limine ab ipso
ad vitam possint conlecta mente reverti,
quam quo decursum prope iam siet ire et abire?
Praeterea, quoniam dolor est, ubi materiai
corpora vi quadam per viscera viva per artus
965 sollicitata suis trepidant in sedibus intus,
inque locum quando remigrant, fit blanda voluptas,
scire licet nullo primordia posse dolore
temptari nullamque voluptatem capere ex se;
quandoquidem non sunt ex ullis principiorum
970 corporibus, quorum motus novitate laborent
aut aliquem fructum capiant dulcedinis almae.
haut igitur debent esse ullo praedita sensu.
Denique uti possint sentire animalia quaeque,
principiis si iam est sensus tribuendus eorum,
975 quid, genus humanum proprium de quibus auctumst?
scilicet et risu tremulo concussa cachinnant
et lacrimis spargunt rorantibus ora genasque
multaque de rerum mixtura dicere callent
et sibi proporro quae sint primordia quaerunt;
980 quando quidem totis mortalibus adsimulata
ipsa quoque ex aliis debent constare elementis,
inde alia ex aliis, nusquam consistere ut ausis;
quippe sequar, quod cumque loqui ridereque dices
et sapere, ex aliis eadem haec facientibus ut sit.
985 quod si delira haec furiosaque cernimus esse
et ridere potest non ex ridentibus auctus,
et sapere et doctis rationem reddere dictis
non ex seminibus sapientibus atque disertis,
qui minus esse queant ea quae sentire videmus
990 seminibus permixta carentibus undique sensu?
Denique caelesti sumus omnes semine oriundi;
omnibus ille idem pater est, unde alma liquentis
umoris guttas mater cum terra recepit,
feta parit nitidas fruges arbustaque laeta
995 et genus humanum, parit omnia saecula ferarum,
pabula cum praebet, quibus omnes corpora pascunt
et dulcem ducunt vitam prolemque propagant;
qua propter merito maternum nomen adepta est.
cedit item retro, de terra quod fuit ante,
1000 in terras, et quod missumst ex aetheris oris,
id rursum caeli rellatum templa receptant.

nec sic interemit mors res ut material
corpora conficiat, sed coetum dissupat ollis;
inde aliis aliud coniungit et efficit, omnis
1005 res ut convertant formas mutantque colores
et capiant sensus et puncto tempore reddant;
ut noscas referre earum primordia rerum
cum quibus et quali positura contineantur
et quos inter se dent motus accipiantque,
1010 neve putes aeterna penes residere potesse
corpora prima quod in summis fluitare videmus
rebus et interdum nasci subitoque perire.
quin etiam refert nostris in versibus ipsis
cum quibus et quali sint ordine quaeque locata;
1015 namque eadem caelum mare terras flumina solem
significant, eadem fruges arbusta animantis;
si non omnia sunt, at multo maxima pars est
consimilis; verum positura discrepant res.
sic ipsis in rebus item iam material
1020 intervalla vias conexus pondera plagas
concursus motus ordo positura figurae
cum permutantur, mutari res quoque debent.
Nunc animum nobis adhibe veram ad rationem.
nam tibi vehementer nova res molitur ad aures
1025 accedere et nova se species ostendere rerum.
sed neque tam facilis res ulla est, quin ea primum
difficilis magis ad credendum constet, itemque
nil adeo magnum neque tam mirabile quicquam,
quod non paulatim minuant mirarier omnes,
1030 principio caeli clarum purumque colorem
quaeque in se cohibet, palantia sidera passim,
lunamque et solis praeclara luce nitorem;
omnia quae nunc si primum mortalibus essent
ex improvviso si sint obiecta repente,
1035 quid magis his rebus poterat mirabile dici,
aut minus ante quod auderent fore credere gentes?
nil, ut opinor; ita haec species miranda fuisset.
quam tibi iam nemo fessus satiate videndi,
susplicere in caeli dignatur lucida templa.
1040 desine qua propter novitate exterritus ipsa
expuere ex animo rationem, sed magis acri
iudicio perpende, et si tibi vera videntur,
dede manus, aut, si falsum est, accingere contra.
quaerit enim rationem animus, cum summa loci sit
1045 infinita foris haec extra moenia mundi,

quid sit ibi porro, quo prospicere usque velit mens
atque animi iactus liber quo pervolet ipse.

Principio nobis in cunctas undique partis
et latere ex utroque supra supterque per omne
1050 nulla est finis; uti docui, res ipsaque per se
vociferatur, et elucet natura profundi.

nullo iam pacto veri simile esse putandumst,
undique cum vorsum spatium vacet infinitum
seminaque innumero numero summaque profunda

1055 multimodis volitent aeterno percita motu,
hunc unum terrarum orbem caelumque creatum,
nil agere illa foris tot corpora materiai;
cum praesertim hic sit natura factus et ipsa
sponte sua forte offensando semina rerum

1060 multimodis temere in cassum frustra que coacta
tandem coluerunt ea quae coniecta repente
magnarum rerum fierent exordia semper,
terrai maris et caeli generisque animantium.

quare etiam atque etiam talis fateare necesse est
1065 esse alios alibi congressus materiai,
qualis hic est, avido complexu quem tenet aether.

Praeterea cum materies est multa parata,
cum locus est praesto nec res nec causa moratur
ulla, geri debent ni mirum et confieri res.

1070 nunc et seminibus si tanta est copia, quantam
enumerare aetas animantium non queat omnis,
quis eadem natura manet, quae semina rerum
conicere in loca quaeque queat simili ratione
atque huc sunt coniecta, necesse est confiteare

1075 esse alios aliis terrarum in partibus orbis
et varias hominum gentis et saecula ferarum.

Huc accedit ut in summa res nulla sit una,
unica quae gignatur et unica solaque crescat,
quin aliquo ius siet saeculi permultaque eodem
1080 sint genere. in primis animalibus indice mente
invenies sic montivagum genus esse ferarum,
sic hominum geminam prolem, sic denique mutas
squamigerum pecudes et corpora cuncta volantum.

qua propter caelum simili ratione fatendumst
1085 terramque et solem, lunam mare cetera quae sunt,
non esse unica, sed numero magis innumerali;
quando quidem vitae depactus terminus alte
tam manet haec et tam nativo corpore constant
quam genus omne, quod his generatimst rebus abundans.

1090 Quae bene cognita si teneas, natura videtur
libera continuo, dominis privata superbis,
ipsa sua per se sponte omnia dis agere experts.
nam pro sancta deum tranquilla pectora pace
quae placidum degunt aevom vitamque serenam,
1095 quis regere immensi summam, quis habere profundi
indu manu validas potis est moderanter habenas,
quis pariter caelos omnis convertere et omnis
ignibus aetheriis terras suffire feracis,
omnibus inve locis esse omni tempore praesto,
1100 nubibus ut tenebras faciat caelique serena
concutiat sonitu, tum fulmina mittat et aedis
saepe suas disturbet et in deserta recedens
saeviat exercens telum, quod saepe nocentes
praeterit exanimatque indignos inque merentes?
1105 Multaque post mundi tempus genitale diemque
primigenum maris et terrae solisque coortum
addita corpora sunt extrinsecus, addita circum
semina, quae magnum iaculando contulit omne,
unde mare et terrae possent augescere et unde
1110 appareret spatium caeli domus altaque tecta
tolleret a terris procul et consurgeret aer.
nam sua cuique, locis ex omnibus, omnia plagis
corpora distribuuntur et ad sua saecula recedunt,
umor ad umorem, terreno corpore terra
1115 crescit et ignem ignes procidunt aetheraque aether,
donique ad extremum crescendi perfica finem
omnia perduxit rerum natura creatrix;
ut fit ubi nihilo iam plus est quod datur intra
vitalis venas quam quod fluit atque recedit.
1120 omnibus hic aetas debet consistere rebus,
hic natura suis refrenat viribus auctum.
nam quae cumque vides hilario grandescere adauctu
paulatimque gradus aetatis scandere adultae,
plura sibi adsumunt quam de se corpora mittunt,
1125 dum facile in venas cibus omnis inditur et dum
non ita sunt late dispessa, ut multa remittant
et plus dispendi faciant quam vescitur aetas.
nam certe fluere atque recedere corpora rebus
multa manus dandum est; sed plura accedere debent,
1130 donec alescendi summum tetigere cacumen.
inde minutatim vires et robur adultum
frangit et in partem peiorem liquitur aetas.
quippe etenim quanto est res amplior, augmine adempto,

et quo latior est, in cunctas undique partis
1135 plura modo dispargit et a se corpora mittit,
nec facile in venas cibus omnis diditur ei
nec satis est, pro quam largos exaestuat aestus,
unde queat tantum suboriri ac subpeditare.
iure igitur pereunt, cum rarefacta fluendo
1140 sunt et cum externis succumbunt omnia plagis,
quando quidem grandi cibus aevo denique defit,
nec tuditantia rem cessant extrinsecus ullam
corpora conficere et plagis infesta domare.
Sic igitur magni quoque circum moenia mundi
1145 expugnata dabunt labem putrisque ruinas;
omnia debet enim cibus integrare novando
et fulcire cibus, cibus omnia sustentare,
ne quiquam, quoniam nec venae perpetiuntur
quod satis est, neque quantum opus est natura ministrat.
1150 Iamque adeo fracta est aetas effetaque tellus
vix animalia parva creat, quae cuncta creavit
saecla deditque ferarum ingentia corpora partu.
haud, ut opinor, enim mortalia saecla superne
aurea de caelo demisit funis in arva
1155 nec mare nec fluctus plangentis saxa crearunt,
sed genuit tellus eadem quae nunc alit ex se.
praeterea nitidas fruges vinetaque laeta
sponte sua primum mortalibus ipsa creavit,
ipsa dedit dulcis fetus et pabula laeta;
1160 quae nunc vix nostro grandescunt aucta labore,
conterimusque boves et viris agricolarum,
conficimus ferrum vix arvis suppeditati:
usque adeo parcunt fetus augentque laborem.
iamque caput quassans grandis suspirat arator
1165 crebrius, in cassum magnos cecidisse labores,
et cum tempora temporibus praesentia confert
praeteritis, laudat fortunas saepe parentis.
tristis item vetulae vitis sator atque vietae
temporis incusat momen saeclumque fatigat,
1170 et crepat, antiquum genus ut pietate repletum
perfacile angustis tolerarit finibus aevom,
cum minor esset agri multo modus ante viritim;
nec tenet omnia paulatim tabescere et ire
ad capulum spatio aetatis defessa vetusto.

Liber Tertius

E tenebris tantis tam clarum extollere lumen
qui primus potuisti inlustrans commoda vitae,
te sequor, o Graiae gentis decus, inque tuis nunc
ficta pedum pono pressis vestigia signis,
5 non ita certandi cupidus quam propter amorem
quod te imitari aveo; quid enim contendat hirundo
cynnis, aut quid nam tremulis facere artibus haedi
consimile in cursu possint et fortis equi vis?
tu, pater, es rerum inventor, tu patria nobis
10 suppeditas praecepta, tuisque ex, inclute, chartis,
floriferis ut apes in saltibus omnia libant,
omnia nos itidem depascimur aurea dicta,
aurea, perpetua semper dignissima vita.
nam simul ac ratio tua coepit vociferari
15 naturam rerum divina mente coorta
diffugiunt animi terrores, moenia mundi
discedunt. totum video per inane geri res.
apparet divum numen sedesque quietae,
quas neque concutiunt venti nec nubila nimbis
20 aspergunt neque nix acri concreta pruina
cana cadens violat semperque innubilus aether
integit et large diffuso lumine ridet:
omnia suppeditat porro natura neque ulla
res animi pacem delibat tempore in ullo.
25 at contra nusquam apparent Acherusia templa,
nec tellus obstat quin omnia dispiciantur,
sub pedibus quae cumque infra per inane geruntur.
his ibi me rebus quaedam divina voluptas
percipit atque horror, quod sic natura tua vi
30 tam manifesta patens ex omni parte relecta est.
Et quoniam docui, cunctarum exordia rerum
qualia sint et quam variis distantia formis
sponte sua volitent aeterno percita motu,
quove modo possint res ex his quaeque creari,
35 hasce secundum res animi natura videtur
atque animae claranda meis iam versibus esse
et metus ille foras praeceps Acheruntis agendus,
funditus humanam qui vitam turbat ab imo
omnia suffundens mortis nigrore neque ullam
40 esse voluptatem liquidam puramque relinquit.
nam quod saepe homines morbos magis esse timendos

infamemque ferunt vitam quam Tartara leti
et se scire animi naturam sanguinis esse,
aut etiam venti, si fert ita forte voluntas,
45 nec prosum quicquam nostrae rationis egere,
hinc licet advertas animum magis omnia laudis
iactari causa quam quod res ipsa probetur.
extorres idem patria longeque fugati
conspectu ex hominum, foedati crimine turpi,
50 omnibus aerumnis adfecti denique vivunt,
et quo cumque tamen miseri venere parentant
et nigras mactant pecudes et manibus divis
inferias mittunt multoque in rebus acerbis
acrius advertunt animos ad religionem.
55 quo magis in dubiis hominem spectare periculis
convenit adversisque in rebus noscere qui sit;
nam verae voces tum demum pectore ab imo
eliciuntur et eripitur persona amanare.
denique avarities et honorum caeca cupido,
60 quae miseros homines cogunt transcendere fines
iuris et inter dum socios scelerum atque ministros
noctes atque dies niti praestante labore
ad summas emergere opes, haec vulnera vitae
non minimam partem mortis formidine aluntur.
65 turpis enim ferme contemptus et acris egestas
semota ab dulci vita stabilique videtur
et quasi iam leti portas cunctarier ante;
unde homines dum se falso terrore coacti
effugisse volunt longe longeque remosse,
70 sanguine civili rem conflant divitiasque
conduplicant avidi, caedem caede accumulantes,
crudeles gaudent in tristi funere fratris
et consanguineum mensas odere timentque.
consimili ratione ab eodem saepe timore
75 macerat invidia ante oculos illum esse potentem,
illum aspectari, claro qui incedit honore,
ipsi se in tenebris volvi caenoque queruntur.
intereunt partim statuarum et nominis ergo.
et saepe usque adeo, mortis formidine, vitae
80 percipit humanos odium lucisque videndae,
ut sibi consciscant maerenti pectore letum
obliti fontem curarum hunc esse timorem:
hunc vexare pudorem, hunc vincula amicitiai
rumpere et in summa pietate evertere suadet:
85 nam iam saepe homines patriam carosque parentis

prodiderunt vitare Acherusia templa petentes.
nam vel uti pueri trepidant atque omnia caecis
in tenebris metuunt, sic nos in luce timemus
inter dum, nihilo quae sunt metuenda magis quam
90 quae pueri in tenebris pavitant finguntque futura.
hunc igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque necessest
non radii solis neque lucida tela diei
discutiant, sed naturae species ratioque.
Primum animum dico, mentem quem saepe vocamus,
95 in quo consilium vitae regimenque locatum est,
esse hominis partem nihilo minus ac manus et pes
atque oculi partes animantis totius extant.

* * *

sensum animi certa non esse in parte locatum,
verum habitum quendam vitalem corporis esse,
100 harmoniam Grai quam dicunt, quod faciat nos
vivere cum sensu, nulla cum in parte siet mens;
ut bona saepe valetudo cum dicitur esse
corporis, et non est tamen haec pars ulla valentis,
sic animi sensum non certa parte reponunt;
105 magno opere in quo mi diversi errare videntur.
Saepe itaque, in promptu corpus quod cernitur, aegret,
cum tamen ex alia laetamur parte latenti;
et retro fit ubi contra sit saepe vicissim,
cum miser ex animo laetatur corpore toto;
110 non alio pacto quam si, pes cum dolet aegri,
in nullo caput interea sit forte dolore.
Praeterea molli cum somno dedita membra
effusumque iacet sine sensu corpus honustum,
est aliud tamen in nobis quod tempore in illo
115 multimodis agitur et omnis accipit in se
laetitiae motus et curas cordis inanis.
Nunc animam quoque ut in membris cognoscere possis
esse neque harmonia corpus sentire solere,
principio fit uti detracto corpore multo
120 saepe tamen nobis in membris vita moretur.
Atque eadem rursum, cum corpora pauca caloris
diffugere forasque per os est editus aër,
deserit extemplo venas atque ossa relinquit;
noscere ut hinc possis non aequas omnia partis
125 corpora habere neque ex aequo fulcire salutem,
sed magis haec, venti quae sunt calidique vaporis
semina, curare in membris ut vita moretur.

est igitur calor ac ventus vitalis in ipso
corpore, qui nobis moribundos deserit artus.

130 quapropter quoniam est animi natura reperta
atque animae quasi pars hominis, redde harmoniai
nomen, ad organicos alto delatum Heliconi,
sive aliunde ipsi porro traxere et in illam
transtulerunt, proprio quae tum res nomine egebat.

135 quidquid id est, habeant: tu cetera percipe dicta.
Nunc animum atque animam dico coniuncta teneri
inter se atque unam naturam conficere ex se,
sed caput esse quasi et dominari in corpore toto
consilium, quod nos animum mentemque vocamus.

140 idque situm media regione in pectoris haeret.
hic exultat enim pavor ac metus, haec loca circum
laetitiae mulcent: hic ergo mens animusquest.
cetera pars animae per totum dissita corpus
paret et ad numen mentis momenque movetur.

145 idque sibi solum per se sapit et sibi gaudet,
cum neque res animam neque corpus commovet una.
et quasi, cum caput aut oculus temptante dolore
laeditur in nobis, non omni concruciamur
corpore, sic animus nonnumquam laeditur ipse

150 laetitiaque viget, cum cetera pars animai
per membra atque artus nulla novitate cietur;
verum ubi vementi magis est commota metu mens,
consentire animam totam per membra videmus
sudoresque ita palloremque existere toto

155 corpore et infringi linguam vocemque aboriri,
caligare oculos, sonere auris, succidere artus,
denique concidere ex animi terrore videmus
saepe homines; facile ut quivis hinc noscere possit
esse animam cum animo coniunctam, quae cum animi vi

160 percussa est, exim corpus propellit et icit.
Haec eadem ratio naturam animi atque animai
corpoream docet esse; ubi enim propellere membra,
corripere ex somno corpus mutareque vultum
atque hominem totum regere ac versare videtur,

165 quorum nil fieri sine tactu posse videmus
nec tactum porro sine corpore, nonne fatendumst
corporea natura animum constare animamque?
praeterea pariter fungi cum corpore et una
consentire animum nobis in corpore cernis.

170 si minus offendit vitam vis horrida teli
ossibus ac nervis disclusis intus adacta,

at tamen insequitur languor terraeque petitus
suavis et in terra mentis qui gignitur aestus
inter dumque quasi exsurgendi incerta voluntas.
175 ergo corpoream naturam animi esse necessest,
corporeis quoniam telis ictuque laborat.
Is tibi nunc animus quali sit corpore et unde
constiterit pergam rationem reddere dictis.
principio esse aio persuptilem atque minutis
180 perquam corporibus factum constare. id ita esse
hinc licet advertas animum, ut pernoscere possis.
Nil adeo fieri celeri ratione videtur,
quam si mens fieri proponit et inchoat ipsa;
ocius ergo animus quam res se perciet ulla,
185 ante oculos quorum in promptu natura videtur.
at quod mobile tanto operest, constare rutundis
perquam seminibus debet perquamque minutis,
momine uti parvo possint impulsa moveri.
namque movetur aqua et tantillo momine flutat,
190 quippe volubilibus parvisque creata figuris.
at contra mellis constantior est natura
et pigri latices magis et cunctantior actus:
haeret enim inter se magis omnis materiai
copia, ni mirum quia non tam levibus extat
195 corporibus neque tam suptilibus atque rutundis.
namque papaveris aura potest suspensa levisque
cogere ut ab summo tibi diffluat altus acervus,
at contra lapidum coniectum spicarumque
noenu potest. igitur parvissima corpora pro quam
200 et levissima sunt, ita mobilitate fruuntur;
at contra quae cumque magis cum pondere magno
asperaque inveniuntur, eo stabilita magis sunt.
nunc igitur quoniamst animi natura reperta
mobilis egregie, perquam constare necessest
205 corporibus parvis et levibus atque rutundis.
quae tibi cognita res in multis, o bone, rebus
utilis invenietur et opportuna cluebit.
Haec quoque res etiam naturam dedicat eius,
quam tenui constet textura quamque loco se
210 contineat parvo, si possit conglomerari,
quod simul atque hominem leti segura quies est
indepta atque animi natura animaeque recessit,
nil ibi libatum de toto corpore cernas
ad speciem, nihil ad pondus: mors omnia praestat,
215 vitalem praeter sensum calidumque vaporem.

ergo animam totam perparvis esse necessest
seminibus nexam per venas viscera nervos,
qua tenuis, omnis ubi e toto iam corpore cessit,
extima membrorum circumcaesura tamen se
220 incolumem praestat nec deficit ponderis hilum.
quod genus est, Bacchi cum flos evanuit aut cum
spiritus unguenti suavis diffugit in auras
aut aliquo cum iam sucus de corpore cessit;
nil oculis tamen esse minor res ipsa videtur
225 propterea neque detractum de pondere quicquam,
ni mirum quia multa minutaque semina sucos
efficiunt et odorem in toto corpore rerum.
quare etiam atque etiam mentis naturam animaeque
scire licet perquam paucillis esse creatam
230 seminibus, quoniam fugiens nil ponderis aufert.
Nec tamen haec simplex nobis natura putanda est.
tenvis enim quaedam moribundos deserit aura
mixta vapore, vapor porro trahit aëra secum;
nec calor est quisquam, cui non sit mixtus et aër;
235 rara quod eius enim constat natura, necessest
aëris inter eum primordia multa moveri.
iam triplex animi est igitur natura reperta;
nec tamen haec sat sunt ad sensum cuncta creandum,
nil horum quoniam recipit mens posse creare
240 sensiferos motus, quae denique mente volutat.
quarta quoque his igitur quaedam natura necessest
adtribuatur; east omnino nominis expers;
qua neque mobilius quicquam neque tenvius extat
nec magis e parvis et levibus ex elementis;
245 sensiferos motus quae didit prima per artus.
prima cietur enim, parvis perfecta figuris,
inde calor motus et venti caeca potestas
accipit, inde aër, inde omnia mobilitantur:
concutitur sanguis, tum viscera persentiscunt
250 omnia, postremis datur ossibus atque medullis
sive voluptas est sive est contrarius ardor.
nec temere huc dolor usque potest penetrare neque acre
permanare malum, quin omnia perturbentur
usque adeo ut vitae desit locus atque animai
255 diffugiant partes per caulas corporis omnis.
sed plerumque fit in summo quasi corpore finis
motibus: hanc ob rem vitam retinere valemus.
Nunc ea quo pacto inter sese mixta quibusque
compta modis vigeant rationem reddere aventem

260 abstrahit invitum patrii sermonis egestas;
sed tamen, ut potero summatim attingere, tangam.
inter enim cursant primordia principiorum
motibus inter se, nihil ut secernier unum
possit nec spatio fieri divisa potestas,
265 sed quasi multae vis unius corporis extant.
quod genus in quovis animantum viscere volgo
est odor et quidam color et sapor, et tamen ex his
omnibus est unum perfectum corporis augmen,
sic calor atque aër et venti caeca potestas
270 mixta creant unam naturam et mobilis illa
vis, initum motus ab se quae dividit ollis,
sensifer unde oritur primum per viscera motus.
nam penitus prorsum latet haec natura subestque
nec magis hac infra quicquam est in corpore nostro
275 atque anima est animae proporro totius ipsa.
quod genus in nostris membris et corpore toto
mixta latens animi vis est animaeque potestas,
corporibus quia de parvis paucisque creatast,
sic tibi nominis haec expers vis, facta minutis
280 corporibus, latet atque animae quasi totius ipsa
proporrost anima et dominatur corpore toto.
consimili ratione necessest ventus et aër
et calor inter se vigeant commixta per artus
atque aliis aliud subsit magis emineatque,
285 ut quiddam fieri videatur ab omnibus unum,
ni calor ac ventus seorsum seorsumque potestas
aëris interemant sensum diductaque solvant.
est etiam calor ille animo, quem sumit, in ira
cum fervescit et ex oculis micat acrius ardor;
290 est et frigida multa, comes formidinis, aura,
quae ciet horrorem membris et concitat artus;
est etiam quoque pacati status aëris ille,
pectore tranquillo fit qui voltuque sereno.
sed calidi plus est illis quibus acria corda
295 iracundaque mens facile effervescit in ira,
quo genere in primis vis est violenta leonum,
pectora qui fremitu rumpunt plerumque gementes
nec capere irarum fluctus in pectore possunt.
at ventosa magis cervorum frigida mens est
300 et gelidas citius per viscera concitat auras,
quae tremulum faciunt membris existere motum.
at natura boum placido magis aëre vivit
nec nimis irai fax umquam subdita percit

fumida, suffundens caecae caliginis umbra,
305 nec gelidis torpet telis perfixa pavoris;
interutrasque sitast cervos saevosque leones.
sic hominum genus est: quamvis doctrina politos
constituat pariter quosdam, tamen illa relinquit
naturae cuiusque animi vestigia prima.
310 nec radicitus evelli mala posse putandumst,
quin proclivius hic iras decurrat ad acris,
ille metu citius paulo temptetur, at ille
tertius accipiat quaedam clementius aequo.
inque aliis rebus multis differre necessest
315 naturas hominum varias moresque sequacis;
quorum ego nunc nequeo caecas exponere causas
nec reperire figurarum tot nomina quot sunt
principiis, unde haec oritur variantia rerum.
illud in his rebus video firmare potesse,
320 usque adeo naturarum vestigia linqui
parvola, quae nequeat ratio depellere nobis,
ut nihil inpediat dignam dis degere vitam.
Haec igitur natura tenetur corpore ab omni
ipsaque corporis est custos et causa salutis;
325 nam communibus inter se radicibus haerent
nec sine pernicie divelli posse videntur.
quod genus e thuris glaebis evellere odorem
haud facile est, quin intereat natura quoque eius,
sic animi atque animae naturam corpore toto
330 extrahere haut facile est, quin omnia dissolvantur.
inplexis ita principiis ab origine prima
inter se fiunt consorti praedita vita,
nec sibi quaeque sine alterius vi posse videtur
corporis atque animi seorsum sentire potestas,
335 sed communibus inter eas conflatur utrimque
motibus accensus nobis per viscera sensus.
Praeterea corpus per se nec gignitur umquam
nec crescit neque post mortem durare videtur.
non enim, ut umor aquae dimittit saepe vaporem,
340 qui datus est, neque ea causa convellitur ipse,
sed manet incolumis, non, inquam, sic animai
discidium possunt artus perferre relictis,
sed penitus pereunt convulsi conque putrescunt.
ex ineunte aevo sic corporis atque animai
345 mutua vitalis discunt contagia motus,
maternis etiam membris alvoque reposta,
discidium ut nequeat fieri sine peste maloque;

ut videas, quoniam coniunctast causa salutis,
coniunctam quoque naturam consistere eorum.

350 Quod super est, siquis corpus sentire refutat
atque animam credit permixtam corpore toto
suscipere hunc motum quem sensum nominamus,
vel manifestas res contra verasque repugnat.

quid sit enim corpus sentire quis adferet umquam,
355 si non ipsa palam quod res dedit ac docuit nos?
'at dimissa anima corpus caret undique sensu.'

perdit enim quod non proprium fuit eius in aevo
multaque praeterea perdit quom expellitur aevo.
Dicere porro oculos nullam rem cernere posse,
360 sed per eos animum ut foribus spectare reclusis,
difficilest, contra cum sensus ducat eorum;

sensus enim trahit atque acies detrudit ad ipsas,
fulgida praesertim cum cernere saepe nequimus,
lumina luminibus quia nobis praepediuntur.

365 quod foribus non fit; neque enim, qua cernimus ipsi,
ostia suscipiunt ullum reclusa laborem.

praeterea si pro foribus sunt lumina nostra,
iam magis exemptis oculis debere videtur
cernere res animus sublatis postibus ipsis.

370 Illud in his rebus nequaquam sumere possis,
Democriti quod sancta viri sententia ponit,
corporis atque animi primordia singula primis
adposita alternis, variare ac nectere membra.
nam cum multo sunt animae elementa minora

375 quam quibus e corpus nobis et viscera constant,
tum numero quoque concedunt et rara per artus
dissita sunt, dum taxat ut hoc promittere possis,
quantula prima queant nobis iniecta ciere
corpora sensiferos motus in corpore, tanta
380 intervalla tenere exordia prima animai.

nam neque pulveris inter dum sentimus adhaesum
corpore nec membris incussam sidere cretam,
nec nebulam noctu neque arani tenvia fila
obvia sentimus, quando obretimur euntes,

385 nec supera caput eiusdem cecidisse vietam
vestem nec plumas avium papposque volantis,
qui nimia levitate cadunt plerumque gravatim,
nec repentis itum cuiusvis cumque animantis
sentimus nec priva pedum vestigia quaeque,

390 corpore quae in nostro culices et cetera ponunt.
usque adeo prius est in nobis multa ciendum

quam primordia sentiscant concussa animai,
semina corporibus nostris inmixta per artus,
et quam in his intervallis tuditantia possint
395 concursare coire et dissultare vicissim.
Et magis est animus vitae claustra coercens
et dominantior ad vitam quam vis animai.
nam sine mente animoque nequit residere per artus
temporis exiguam partem pars ulla animai,
400 sed comes insequitur facile et discedit in auras
et gelidos artus in leti frigore linquit.
at manet in vita cui mens animusque remansit,
quamvis est circum caesis lacer undique membris;
truncus adempta anima circum membrisque remota
405 vivit et aetherias vitalis suscipit auras;
si non omnimodis, at magna parte animai
privatus, tamen in vita cunctatur et haeret;
ut, lacerato oculo circum si pupula mansit
incolumis, stat cernundi vivata potestas,
410 dum modo ne totum corrumpas luminis orbem
et circum caedas aciem solamque relinquis;
id quoque enim sine perniciē non fiet eorum.
at si tantula pars oculi media illa peresa est,
occidit extemplo lumen tenebraeque secuntur,
415 incolumis quamvis alioqui splendidus orbis.
hoc anima atque animus vincti sunt foedere semper.
Nunc age, nativos animantibus et mortalis
esse animos animasque levis ut noscere possis,
conquisita diu dulcique reperta labore
420 digna tua pergam disponere carmina vita.
tu fac utrumque uno subiungas nomine eorum
atque animam verbi causa cum dicere pergam,
mortalem esse docens, animum quoque dicere credas,
qua tenus est unum inter se coniunctaque res est.
425 Principio quoniam tenuem constare minutis
corporibus docui multoque minoribus esse
principiis factam quam liquidus umor aquai
aut nebula aut fumus — nam longe mobilitate
praestat et a tenui causa magis icta movetur,
430 quippe ubi imaginibus fumi nebulaeque movetur;
quod genus in somnis sopiti ubi cernimus alte
exhalare vaporem altaria ferreque fumum;
nam procul haec dubio nobis simulacra gerunturÆ
nunc igitur quoniam quassatis undique vasis
435 diffluere umorem et laticem discedere cernis,

et nebula ac fumus quoniam discedit in auras,
crede animam quoque diffundi multoque perire
ocius et citius dissolvi in corpora prima,
cum semel ex hominis membris ablata recessit;
440 quippe etenim corpus, quod vas quasi constitit eius,
cum cohibere nequit conquassatum ex aliqua re
ac rarefactum detracto sanguine venis,
aëre qui credas posse hanc cohiberier ullo,
corpore qui nostro rarus magis incohibens sit?
445 Praeterea gigni pariter cum corpore et una
crescere sentimus pariterque senescere mentem.
nam vel ut infirmo pueri teneroque vagantur
corpore, sic animi sequitur sententia tenvis.
inde ubi robustis adolevit viribus aetas,
450 consilium quoque maius et auctior est animi vis.
post ubi iam validis quassatum est viribus aevi
corpus et obtusis ceciderunt viribus artus,
claudicat ingenium, delirat lingua labat mens,
omnia deficiunt atque uno tempore desunt.
455 ergo dissolui quoque convenit omnem animai
naturam, ceu fumus, in altas aëris auras;
quando quidem gigni pariter pariterque videmus
crescere et, ut docui, simul aevo fessa fatisci.
Huc accedit uti videamus, corpus ut ipsum
460 suscipere inmanis morbos durumque dolorem,
sic animum curas acris luctumque metumque;
quare participem leti quoque convenit esse.
quin etiam morbis in corporis avius errat
saepe animus; dementit enim deliraque fatur,
465 inter dumque gravi lethargo fertur in altum
aeternumque soporem oculis nutuque cadenti;
unde neque exaudit voces nec noscere voltus
illorum potis est, ad vitam qui revocantes
circum stant lacrimis rorantes ora genasque.
470 quare animum quoque dissolui fateare necessest,
quandoquidem penetrant in eum contagia morbi;
nam dolor ac morbus leti fabricator uterquest,
multorum exitio perdocti quod sumus ante.
et quoniam mentem sanari corpus ut aegrum
475 et pariter mentem sanari corpus inani
denique cor, hominem cum vini vis penetravit
acris et in venas discessit diditus ardor,
consequitur gravitas membrorum, praepediuntur
crura vacillanti, tardescit lingua, madet mens,

480 nant oculi, clamor singultus iurgia gliscunt,
et iam cetera de genere hoc quae cumque secuntur,
cur ea sunt, nisi quod vehemens violentia vini
conturbare animam consuevit corpore in ipso?
at quae cumque queunt conturbari inque pediri,
485 significant, paulo si durior insinuarit
causa, fore ut pereant aevo privata futuro.
Quin etiam subito vi morbi saepe coactus
ante oculos aliquis nostros, ut fulminis ictu,
concidit et spumas agit, ingemit et tremit artus,
490 desipit, extentat nervos, torquetur, anhelat
inconstanter, et in iactando membra fatigat,
ni mirum quia vis morbi distracta per artus
turbat agens animam, spumans ut in aequore salso
ventorum validis fervescunt viribus undae.
495 exprimitur porro gemitus, quia membra dolore
adfiuntur et omnino quod semina vocis
eliciuntur et ore foras glomerata feruntur
qua quasi consuerunt et sunt munita viai.
desipientia fit, quia vis animi atque animai
500 conturbatur et, ut docui, divisa seorsum
disiectatur eodem illo distracta veneno.
inde ubi iam morbi reflexit causa, reditque
in latebras acer corrupti corporis umor,
tum quasi vaccillans primum consurgit et omnis
505 paulatim redit in sensus animamque receptat.
haec igitur tantis ubi morbis corpore in ipso
iactentur miserisque modis distracta laborent,
cur eadem credis sine corpore in aëre aperto
cum validis ventis aetatem degere posse?
510 Et quoniam mentem sanari corpus ut aegrum
cernimus et flecti medicina posse videmus,
id quoque praesagit mortalem vivere mentem.
addere enim partis aut ordine traecere aecumst
aut aliquid prosum de summa detrahare hilum,
515 commutare animum qui cumque adoritur et infit
aut aliam quamvis naturam flectere quaerit.
at neque transferri sibi partis nec tribui vult
inmortale quod est quicquam neque defluere hilum;
nam quod cumque suis mutatum finibus exit,
520 continuo hoc mors est illius quod fuit ante.
ergo animus sive aegrescit, mortalia signa
mittit, uti docui, seu flectitur a medicina.
usque adeo falsae rationi vera videtur

res occurrere et effugium praecludere eunti
525 ancipitique refutatu convincere falsum.
Denique saepe hominem paulatim cernimus ire
et membratim vitalem deperdere sensum;
in pedibus primum digitos livescere et unguis,
inde pedes et crura mori, post inde per artus
530 ire alios tractim gelidi vestigia leti.
scinditur atque animae haec quoniam natura nec uno
tempore sincera existit, mortalis habendast.
quod si forte putas ipsam se posse per artus
introsum trahere et partis conducere in unum
535 atque ideo cunctis sensum diducere membris,
at locus ille tamen, quo copia tanta animai
cogitur, in sensu debet maiore videri;
qui quoniam nusquamst, ni mirum, ut diximus ante,
dilaniata foras dispargitur, interit ergo.
540 quin etiam si iam libeat concedere falsum
et dare posse animam glomerari in corpore eorum,
lumina qui lincunt moribundi particulatim,
mortalem tamen esse animam fateare necesse
nec refert utrum pereat dispersa per auras
545 an contracta suis e partibus obbrutescat,
quando hominem totum magis ac magis undique sensus
deficit et vitae minus et minus undique restat.
Et quoniam mens est hominis pars una locoque
fixa manet certo, vel ut aures atque oculi sunt
550 atque alii sensus qui vitam cumque gubernant,
et vel uti manus atque oculus naresve seorsum
secreta ab nobis nequeunt sentire neque esse,
sed tamen in parvo lincuntur tempore tali,
sic animus per se non quit sine corpore et ipso
555 esse homine, illius quasi quod vas esse videtur,
sive aliud quid vis potius coniunctius ei
fingere, quandoquidem conexu corpus adhaeret.
Denique corporis atque animi vivata potestas
inter se coniuncta valent vitaeque fruuntur;
560 nec sine corpore enim vitalis edere motus
sola potest animi per se natura nec autem
cassum anima corpus durare et sensibus uti.
scilicet avolsus radicibus ut nequit ullam
dispicere ipse oculus rem seorsum corpore toto,
565 sic anima atque animus per se nil posse videtur.
ni mirum quia per venas et viscera mixtim,
per nervos atque ossa tenentur corpore ab omni

nec magnis intervallis primordia possunt
libera dissultare, ideo conclusa moventur
570 sensiferos motus, quos extra corpus in auras
aëris haut possunt post mortem eiecta moveri
propterea quia non simili ratione tenentur;
corpus enim atque animans erit aër, si cohibere
sese anima atque in eos poterit concludere motus,
575 quos ante in nervis et in ipso corpore agebat.
quare etiam atque etiam resoluta corporis omni
tegmine et eiectis extra vitalibus auris
dissolui sensus animi fateare necessest
atque animam, quoniam coniunctast causa duobus.
580 Denique cum corpus nequeat perferre animai
discidium, quin in taetro tabescat odore,
quid dubitas quin ex imo penitusque coorta
emanarit uti fumus diffusa animae vis,
atque ideo tanta mutatum putre ruina
585 conciderit corpus, penitus quia mota loco sunt
fundamenta foras manant animaeque per artus
perque viarum omnis flexus, in corpore qui sunt,
atque foramina? multimodis ut noscere possis
dispertitam animae naturam exisse per artus
590 et prius esse sibi distractam corpore in ipso,
quam prolapsa foras enaret in aëris auras.
Quin etiam finis dum vitae vertitur intra,
saepe aliqua tamen e causa labefacta videtur
ire anima ac toto solui de corpore tota
595 et quasi supremo languescere tempore voltus
molliaque exsanguī cadere omnia corpore membra.
quod genus est, animo male factum cum perhibetur
aut animam liquisse; ubi iam trepidatur et omnes
extremum cupiunt vitae reprehendere vinclum;
600 conquassatur enim tum mens animaeque potestas
omnis. et haec ipso cum corpore conlabefiunt,
ut gravior paulo possit dissolvere causa.
Quid dubitas tandem quin extra prodita corpus
inbecilla foras in aperto, tegmine dempto,
605 non modo non omnem possit durare per aevom,
sed minimum quodvis nequeat consistere tempus?
nec sibi enim quisquam moriens sentire videtur
ire foras animam incolumem de corpore toto,
nec prius ad iugulum et supera succedere fauces,
610 verum deficere in certa regione locatam;
ut sensus alios in parti quemque sua scit

dissolui. quod si immortalis nostra foret mens,
non tam se moriens dissolvi conquereretur,
sed magis ire foras vestemque relinquere, ut anguis.
615 Denique cur animi numquam mens consiliumque
gignitur in capite aut pedibus manibusve, sed unis
sedibus et certis regionibus omnibus haeret,
si non certa loca ad nascendum reddita cuique
sunt, et ubi quicquid possit durare creatum
620 atque ita multimodis partitis artubus esse,
membrorum ut numquam existat praeposterus ordo?
usque adeo sequitur res rem, neque flamma creari
fluminibus solitast neque in igni gignier alior.
Praeterea si immortalis natura animaist
625 et sentire potest secreta a corpore nostro,
quinque, ut opinor, eam faciundum est sensibus auctam.
nec ratione alia nosmet proponere nobis
possumus infernas animas Acherunte vagare.
pictores itaque et scriptorum saecula priora
630 sic animas intro duxerunt sensibus auctas.
at neque sorsum oculi neque nares nec manus ipsa
esse potest animae neque sorsum lingua neque aures;
haud igitur per se possunt sentire neque esse.
Et quoniam toto sentimus corpore inesse
635 vitalem sensum et totum esse animale videmus,
si subito medium celeri praeciderit ictu
vis aliqua, ut sorsum partem secernat utramque,
dispertita procul dubio quoque vis animai
et discissa simul cum corpore dissocietur.
640 at quod scinditur et partis discedit in ulla,
scilicet aeternam sibi naturam abnuat esse.
falciferos memorant currus abscidere membra
saepe ita de subito permixta caede calentis,
ut tremere in terra videatur ab artubus id quod
645 decidit abscisum, cum mens tamen atque hominis vis
mobilitate mali non quit sentire dolorem;
et simul in pugnae studio quod dedita mens est,
corpore relicuo pugnam caedesque petessit,
nec tenet amissam laevam cum tegmine saepe
650 inter equos abstraxe rotas falcesque rapaces,
nec cecidisse alius dextram, cum scandit et instat.
inde alius conatur adempto surgere crure,
cum digitos agitat propter moribundus humi pes.
et caput abscisum calido viventeque trunco
655 servat humi voltum vitalem oculosque patentis,

donec reliquias animai reddidit omnes.
quin etiam tibi si, lingua vibrante, minanti
serpentis cauda, procero corpore, utrumque
sit libitum in multas partis discidere ferro,
660 omnia iam sorsum cernes ancisa recenti
volnere tortari et terram conspargere tabo,
ipsam seque retro partem petere ore priorem,
volneris ardenti ut morsu premat icta dolore.
omnibus esse igitur totas dicemus in illis
665 particulis animas? at ea ratione sequetur
unam animantem animas habuisse in corpore multas.
ergo divisast ea quae fuit una simul cum
corpore; quapropter mortale utrumque putandumst,
in multas quoniam partis disciditur aequae.
670 Praeterea si immortalis natura animai
constat et in corpus nascentibus insinuatur,
cur super ante actam aetatem meminisse nequimus
nec vestigia gestarum rerum ulla tenemus?
nam si tanto operest animi mutata potestas,
675 omnis ut actarum exciderit retinentia rerum,
non, ut opinor, id ab leto iam longius errat;
qua propter fateare necessest quae fuit ante
interiisse, et quae nunc est nunc esse creatam.
Praeterea si iam perfecto corpore nobis
680 inferri solitast animi vivata potestas
tum cum gignimur et vitae cum limen inimus,
haud ita conveniebat uti cum corpore et una
cum membris videatur in ipso sanguine cresse,
sed vel ut in cavea per se sibi vivere solam
685 convenit, ut sensu corpus tamen affluat omne.
quare etiam atque etiam neque originis esse putandumst
expertis animas nec leti lege solutas;
nam neque tanto opere adnecti potuisse putandumst
corporibus nostris extrinsecus insinuatam,
690 quod fieri totum contra manifesta docet res
Ænamque ita conexa est per venas viscera nervos
ossaque, uti dentes quoque sensu participantur;
morbus ut indicat et gelidai stringor aquai
et lapis oppressus subitis e frugibus asperÆ
695 nec, tam contextae cum sint, exire videntur
incolumes posse et salvas exsolvere sese
omnibus e nervis atque ossibus articulisque,
quod si forte putas extrinsecus insinuatam
permanare animam nobis per membra solere,

700 tanto quique magis cum corpore fusa peribit;
quod permanat enim, dissolvitur, interit ergo;
disperitur enim per caulas corporis omnis.
ut cibus, in membra atque artus cum diditur omnis,
disperit atque aliam naturam sufficit ex se,
705 sic anima atque animus quamvis est integra recens in
corpus eunt, tamen in manando dissoluuntur,
dum quasi per caulas omnis diduntur in artus
particulae quibus haec animi natura creatur,
quae nunc in nostro dominatur corpore nata
710 ex illa quae tunc periit partita per artus.
quapropter neque natali privata videtur
esse die natura animae nec funeris expers.
Semina praeterea linquuntur necne animai
corpore in exanimo? quod si lincuntur et insunt,
715 haut erit ut merito immortalis possit haberi,
partibus amissis quoniam libata recessit.
sin ita sinceris membris ablata profugit,
ut nullas partis in corpore liquerit ex se,
unde cadavera racenti iam viscere vermes
720 expirant atque unde animantum copia tanta
exos et exanguis tumidos perfluctuat artus?
quod si forte animas extrinsecus insinuari?
vermibus et privas in corpora posse venire
credis nec reputas cur milia multa animarum
725 convenient unde una recesserit, hoc tamen est ut
quaerendum videatur et in discrimen agendum,
utrum tandem animae venentur semina quaeque
vermiculorum ipsaeque sibi fabricentur ubi sint,
an quasi corporibus perfectis insinuentur.
730 at neque cur faciant ipsae quareve laborent
dicere suppeditat. neque enim, sine corpore cum sunt,
sollicitae volitant morbis alguque fameque;
corpus enim magis his vitiis adfine laborat,
et mala multa animus contage fungitur eius.
735 sed tamen his esto quamvis facere utile corpus,
cum subeant; at qua possint via nulla videtur.
haut igitur faciunt animae sibi corpora et artus.
nec tamen est ut qui cum perfectis insinuentur
corporibus; neque enim poterunt suptiliter esse
740 conexae neque consensu contagia fient.
Denique cur acris violentia triste leonum
seminium sequitur, volpes dolus, et fuga cervos?
a patribus datur et a patrius pavor incitat artus,

et iam cetera de genere hoc cur omnia membris
745 ex ineunte aevo generascunt ingenioque,
si non, certa suo quia semine seminioque
vis animi pariter crescit cum corpore quoque?
quod si immortalis foret et mutare soleret
corpora, permixtis animantes moribus essent,
750 effugeret canis Hyrcano de semine saepe
cornigeri incursum cervi tremeretque per auras
aëris accipiter fugiens veniente columba,
desiperent homines, saperent fera saecula ferarum.
illud enim falsa fertur ratione, quod aiunt
755 immortalem animam mutato corpore flecti;
quod mutatur enim, dissolvitur, interit ergo;
traiciuntur enim partes atque ordine migrant;
quare dissolui quoque debent posse per artus,
denique ut intereant una cum corpore cunctae.
760 sin animas hominum dicent in corpora semper
ire humana, tamen quaeram cur e sapienti
stulta queat fieri, nec prudens sit puer ullus,
si non, certa suo quia semine seminioque
nec tam doctus equae pullus quam fortis equi vis.
765 scilicet in tenero tenerascere corpore mentem
confugient. quod si iam fit, fateare necessest
mortalem esse animam, quoniam mutata per artus
tanto opere amittit vitam sensumque priorem.
quove modo poterit pariter cum corpore quoque
770 confirmata cupitum aetatis tangere florem
vis animi, nisi erit consors in origine prima?
quidve foras sibi vult membris exire senectis?
an metuit conclusa manere in corpore putri
et domus aetatis spatio ne fessa vetusto
775 obruat? at non sunt immortalis ulla pericla.
Denique conubia ad Veneris partusque ferarum
esse animas praesto deridiculum esse videtur,
expectare immortalis mortalia membra
innumero numero certareque praeproperanter
780 inter se quae prima potissimaque insinuetur;
si non forte ita sunt animarum foedera pacta,
ut quae prima volans advenerit insinuetur
prima neque inter se contendant viribus hilum.
Denique in aethere non arbor, non aequore in alto
785 nubes esse queunt nec pisces vivere in arvis
nec cruor in lignis neque saxis sucus inesse.
certum ac dispositumst ubi quicquid crescat et insit.

sic animi natura nequit sine corpore oriri
sola neque a nervis et sanguine longius esse.
790 quod si posset enim, multo prius ipsa animi vis
in capite aut umeris aut imis calcibus esse
posset et innasci quavis in parte soleret,
tandem in eodem homine atque in eodem vase manere.
quod quoniam nostro quoque constat corpore certum
795 dispositumque videtur ubi esse et crescere possit
sorsum anima atque animus, tanto magis infitiandum
totum posse extra corpus durare genique.
quare, corpus ubi interiit, periisse necessest
confitere animam distractam in corpore toto.
800 quippe etenim mortale aeterno iungere et una
consentire putare et fungi mutua posse
desiperest; quid enim diversius esse putandumst
aut magis inter se disiunctum discrepitansque,
quam mortale quod est immortalis atque perenni
805 iunctum in concilio saevas tolerare procellas?
praeterea quaecumque manent aeterna necessest
aut quia sunt solido cum corpore respuere ictus
nec penetrare pati sibi quicquam quod queat artas
dissociare intus partis, ut materiai
810 corpora sunt, quorum naturam ostendimus ante,
aut ideo durare aetatem posse per omnem,
plagarum quia sunt expertia sicut inanest,
quod manet intactum neque ab ictu fungitur hilum,
aut etiam quia nulla loci sit copia circum,
815 quo quasi res possint discedere dissoluique,
sicut summarum summast aeterna, neque extra
quis locus est quo diffugiant neque corpora sunt quae
possint incidere et valida dissolvere plaga.
Quod si forte ideo magis immortalis habendast,
820 quod vitalibus ab rebus munita tenetur,
aut quia non veniunt omnino aliena salutis,
aut quia quae veniunt aliqua ratione recedunt
pulsa prius quam quid noceant sentire queamus,

* * *

praeter enim quam quod morbis cum corporis aegret,
825 advenit id quod eam de rebus saepe futuris
macerat inque metu male habet curisque fatigat,
praeteritisque male admissis peccata remordent.
adde furorem animi proprium atque obliviam rerum,
adde quod in nigras lethargi mergitur undas.

830 Nil igitur mors est ad nos neque pertinet hilum,
quandoquidem natura animi mortalis habetur.
et vel ut ante acto nihil tempore sensimus aegri,
ad confligendum venientibus undique Poenis,
omnia cum belli trepido concussa tumultu
835 horrida contremuere sub altis aetheris auris,
in dubioque fuere utrorum ad regna cadendum
omnibus humanis esset terraque marique,
sic, ubi non erimus, cum corporis atque animai
discidium fuerit, quibus e sumus uniter apti,
840 scilicet haud nobis quicquam, qui non erimus tum,
accidere omnino poterit sensumque movere,
non si terra mari miscebitur et mare caelo.
et si iam nostro sentit de corpore postquam
distractast animi natura animaeque potestas,
845 nil tamen est ad nos, qui comptu coniugioque
corporis atque animae consistimus uniter apti.
nec, si materiem nostram collegerit aetas
post obitum rursusque redegerit ut sita nunc est,
atque iterum nobis fuerint data lumina vitae,
850 pertineat quicquam tamen ad nos id quoque factum,
interrupta semel cum sit repetentia nostri.
et nunc nil ad nos de nobis attinet, ante
qui fuimus, neque iam de illis nos adficit angor.
nam cum respicias inmensi temporis omne
855 praeteritum spatium, tum motus material
multimodi quam sint, facile hoc adcredere possis,
semina saepe in eodem, ut nunc sunt, ordine posta
haec eadem, quibus e nunc nos sumus, ante fuisse.
nec memori tamen id quimus reprehendere mente;
860 inter enim iectast vitae pausa vageque
deerrarunt passim motus ab sensibus omnes.
debet enim, misere si forte aegreque futurumst;
ipse quoque esse in eo tum tempore, cui male possit
accidere. id quoniam mors eximit, esseque prohibet
865 illum cui possint incommoda conciliari,
scire licet nobis nihil esse in morte timendum
nec miserum fieri qui non est posse, neque hilum
differre an nullo fuerit iam tempore natus,
mortalem vitam mors cum immortalis ademit.
870 Proinde ubi se videas hominem indignarier ipsum,
post mortem fore ut aut putescat corpore posto
aut flammis interfiat malisve ferarum,
scire licet non sincerum sonere atque subesse

caecum aliquem cordi stimulum, quamvis neget ipse
875 credere se quemquam sibi sensum in morte futurum;
non, ut opinor, enim dat quod promittit et unde
nec radicitus e vita se tollit et eicit,
sed facit esse sui quiddam super inscius ipse.
vividus enim sibi cum proponit quisque futurum,
880 corpus uti volucres lacerent in morte feraeque,
ipse sui miseret; neque enim se dividit illi
nec removel satis a proiecto corpore et illum
se fingit sensuque suo contaminat astans.
hinc indignatur se mortalem esse creatum
885 nec videt in vera nullum fore morte alium se,
qui possit vividus sibi se lugere peremptum
stansque iacentem se lacerari urive dolere.
nam si in morte malumst malis morsuque ferarum
tractari, non invenio qui non sit acerbum
890 ignibus inpositum calidis torrescere flammis
aut in melle situm suffocari atque rigere
frigore, cum summo gelidi cubat aequore saxi,
urgerive superne obrutum pondere terrae.
'Iam iam non domus accipiet te laeta neque uxor
895 optima, nec dulces occurrent oscula nati
praeripere et tacita pectus dulcedine tangent.
non poteris factis florentibus esse tuisque
praesidium. misero misere' aiunt 'omnia ademit
una dies infesta tibi tot praemia vitae.'
900 illud in his rebus non addunt 'nec tibi earum
iam desiderium rerum super insidet una.'
quod bene si videant animo dictisque sequantur,
dissoluant animi magno se angore metuque.
'tu quidem ut es leto sopitus, sic eris aevi
905 quod super est cunctis privatus doloribus aegris;
at nos horrifico cinefactum te prope busto
insatiabiliter deflevimus, aeternumque
nulla dies nobis maerorem e pectore demet.'
illud ab hoc igitur quaerendum est, quid sit amari
910 tanto opere, ad somnum si res redit atque quietem,
cur quisquam aeterno possit tabescere luctu.
Hoc etiam faciunt ubi discubere tenentque
pocula saepe homines et inumbrant ora coronis,
ex animo ut dicant: 'brevis hic est fructus homullis;
915 iam fuerit neque post umquam revocare licebit.'
tam quam in morte mali cum primis hoc sit eorum,
quod sitis exurat miseros atque arida torrat,

aut aliae cuius desiderium insideat rei.
nec sibi enim quisquam tum se vitamque requirit,
920 cum pariter mens et corpus sopita quiescunt;
nam licet aeternum per nos sic esse soporem,
nec desiderium nostri nos adficit ullum,
et tamen haud quaquam nostros tunc illa per artus
longe ab sensiferis primordia motibus errant,
925 cum correptus homo ex somno se colligit ipse.
multo igitur mortem minus ad nos esse putandumst,
si minus esse potest quam quod nihil esse videmus;
maior enim turbae disiectus materiai
consequitur leto nec quisquam expergitus extat,
930 frigida quem semel est vitae pausa secuta.
Denique si vocem rerum natura repente.
mittat et hoc alicui nostrum sic increpet ipsa:
'quid tibi tanto operest, mortalis, quod nimis aegris
luctibus indulges? quid mortem congemis ac fles?
935 nam si grata fuit tibi vita ante acta priorque
et non omnia pertusum congesta quasi in vas
commoda perfluxere atque ingrata interiere;
cur non ut plenus vitae conviva recedis
aequo animoque capis securam, stulte, quietem?
940 sin ea quae fructus cumque es periere profusa
vitaque in offensost, cur amplius addere quaeris,
rursum quod pereat male et ingratum occidat omne,
non potius vitae finem facis atque laboris?
nam tibi praeterea quod machiner inveniamque,
945 quod placeat, nihil est; eadem sunt omnia semper.
si tibi non annis corpus iam marcet et artus
confecti languent, eadem tamen omnia restant,
omnia si perges vivendo vincere saecula,
atque etiam potius, si numquam sis moriturus',
950 quid respondemus, nisi iustam intendere litem
naturam et veram verbis exponere causam?
grandior hic vero si iam seniorque queratur
atque obitum lamentetur miser amplius aequo,
non merito inclamet magis et voce increpet acri:
955 'aufer abhinc lacrimas, baratre, et compesce querellas.
omnia perfunctus vitae praemia marces;
sed quia semper aves quod abest, praesentia temnis,
imperfecta tibi elapsast ingrataque vita,
et nec opinanti mors ad caput adstitit ante
960 quam satur ac plenus possis discedere rerum.
nunc aliena tua tamen aetate omnia mitte

aequo animoque, age dum, magnis concede necessis?
iure, ut opinor, agat, iure increpet inciletque;
cedit enim rerum novitate extrusa vetustas
965 semper, et ex aliis aliud reparare necessest.
Nec quisquam in baratrum nec Tartara deditur atra;
materies opus est, ut crescant postera saecula;
quae tamen omnia te vita perfuncta sequuntur;
nec minus ergo ante haec quam tu cecidere cadentque.
970 sic alid ex alio numquam desistet oriri
vitaque mancipio nulli datur, omnibus usu.
respice item quam nil ad nos ante acta vetustas
temporis aeterni fuerit, quam nascimur ante.
hoc igitur speculum nobis natura futuri
975 temporis exponit post mortem denique nostram.
numquid ibi horribile apparet, num triste videtur
quicquam, non omni somno securius exstat?
Atque ea ni mirum quae cumque Acherunte profundo
prodita sunt esse, in vita sunt omnia nobis.
980 nec miser inpendens magnum timet aëre saxum
Tantalus, ut famast, cassa formidine torpens;
sed magis in vita divom metus urget inanis
mortalis casumque timent quem cuique ferat fors.
nec Tityon volucres ineunt Acherunte iacentem
985 nec quod sub magno scrutentur pectore quicquam
perpetuam aetatem possunt reperire profecto.
quam libet immani proiectu corporis exstet,
qui non sola novem dispessis iugera membris
optineat, sed qui terrai totius orbem,
990 non tamen aeternum poterit perferre dolorem
nec praebere cibum proprio de corpore semper.
sed Tityos nobis hic est, in amore iacentem
quem volucres lacerant atque exest anxius angor
aut alia quavis scindunt cuppedine curae.
995 Sisyphus in vita quoque nobis ante oculos est,
qui petere a populo fascēs saevasque secures
imbibit et semper victus tristisque recedit.
nam petere imperium, quod inanest nec datur umquam,
atque in eo semper durum sufferre laborem,
1000 hoc est adverso nixantem trudere monte
saxum, quod tamen e summo iam vertice rusum
volvitur et plani raptim petit aequora campi.
deinde animi ingratam naturam pascere semper
atque explere bonis rebus satiareque numquam,
1005 quod faciunt nobis annorum tempora, circum

cum redeunt fetusque ferunt variosque lepores,
nec tamen explemur vitae fructibus umquam,
hoc, ut opinor, id est, aevo florente puellas
quod memorant laticem pertusum congerere in vas,
1010 quod tamen expleri nulla ratione potestur.
Cerberus et Furiae iam vero et lucis egestas,
Tartarus horriferos eructans faucibus aestus!
qui neque sunt usquam nec possunt esse profecto;
sed metus in vita poenarum pro male factis
1015 est insignibus insignis scelerisque luela,
carcer et horribilis de saxo iactus deorsum,
verbera carnifices robur pix lammina taedae;
quae tamen etsi absunt, at mens sibi conscia factis
praemetuens adhibet stimulos torretque flagellis,
1020 nec videt interea qui terminus esse malorum
possit nec quae sit poenarum denique finis,
atque eadem metuit magis haec ne in morte gravescant.
hic Acherusia fit stultorum denique vita.
Hoc etiam tibi tute interdum dicere possis.
1025 'lumina sis oculis etiam bonus Ancus reliquit,
qui melior multis quam tu fuit, improbe, rebus.
inde alii multi reges rerumque potentes
occiderunt, magnis qui gentibus imperitarunt.
ille quoque ipse, viam qui quondam per mare magnum
1030 stravit iterque dedit legionibus ire per altum
ac pedibus salsas docuit super ire lucunas
et contempsit equis insultans murmura ponti,
lumine adempto animam moribundo corpore fudit.
Scipiadas, belli fulmen, Carthaginis horror,
1035 ossa dedit terrae proinde ac famul infimus esset.
adde repertoires doctrinarum atque leporum,
adde Heliconiadum comites; quorum unus Homerus
sceptrum potitus eadem aliis sopitus quietest.
denique Democritum postquam matura vetustas
1040 admonuit memores motus languescere mentis,
sponte sua leto caput obuius optulit ipse.
ipse Epicurus obit decurso lumine vitae,
qui genus humanum ingenio superavit et omnis
restinxit stellas exortus ut aetherius sol.
1045 tu vero dubitabis et indignabere obire?
mortua cui vita est prope iam vivo atque videnti,
qui somno partem maiorem conteris aevi,
et viligans stertis nec somnia cernere cessas
sollicitamque geris cassa formidine mentem

1050 nec reperire potes tibi quid sit saepe mali, cum
ebrius urgeris multis miser undique curis
atque animo incerto fluitans errore vagaris.’
Si possent homines, proinde ac sentire videntur
pondus inesse animo, quod se gravitate fatiget,
1055 e quibus id fiat causis quoque noscere et unde
tanta mali tam quam moles in pectore constet,
haut ita vitam agerent, ut nunc plerumque videmus
quid sibi quisque velit nescire et quaerere semper,
commutare locum, quasi onus deponere possit.
1060 exit saepe foras magnis ex aedibus ille,
esse domi quem pertaesumst, subitoque revertit,
quippe foris nihilo melius qui sentiat esse.
currit agens mannos ad villam praecipitanter
auxilium tectis quasi ferre ardentibus instans;
1065 oscitat extemplo, tetigit cum limina villae,
aut abit in somnum gravis atque oblivia quaerit,
aut etiam properans urbem petit atque revisit.
hoc se quisque modo fugit, at quem scilicet, ut fit,
effugere haut potis est: ingratus haeret et odit
1070 propterea, morbi quia causam non tenet aeger;
quam bene si videat, iam rebus quisque relictis
naturam primum studeat cognoscere rerum,
temporis aeterni quoniam, non unius horae,
ambigitur status, in quo sit mortalibus omnis
1075 aetas, post mortem quae restat cumque manendo.
Denique tanto opere in dubiis trepidare periculis
quae mala nos subigit vitai tanta cupido?
certe equidem finis vitae mortalibus adstat
nec devitari letum pote, quin obeamus.
1080 praeterea versamur ibidem atque insumus usque
nec nova vivendo procuditur ulla voluptas;
sed dum abest quod avemus, id exsuperare videtur
cetera; post aliud, cum contigit illud, avemus
et sitis aequa tenet vitai semper hiantis.
1085 posteraque in dubiis fortunam quam vehat aetas,
quidve ferat nobis casus quive exitus instet.
nec prorsum vitam ducendo demimus hilum
tempore de mortis nec delibare valemus,
quo minus esse diu possimus forte perempti.
1090 proinde licet quod vis vivendo condere saecula,
mors aeterna tamen nihilo minus illa manebit,
nec minus ille diu iam non erit, ex hodierno
lumine qui finem vitai fecit, et ille,

mensibus atque annis qui multis occidit ante.

Liber Quartus

Avia Pieridum peragro loca nullius ante
trita solo. iuvat integros accedere fontis
atque haurire, iuvatque novos decerpere flores
insignemque meo capiti petere inde coronam,
5 unde prius nulli velarint tempora musae;
primum quod magnis doceo de rebus et artis
religionum animum nodis exsolvere pergo,
deinde quod obscura de re tam lucida pango
carmina musaeo contingens cuncta lepore.
10 id quoque enim non ab nulla ratione videtur;
nam vel uti pueris absinthia taetra medentes
cum dare conantur, prius oras pocula circum
contingunt mellis dulci flavoque liquore,
ut puerorum aetas improvida ludificetur
15 labrorum tenuis, interea perpotet amarum
absinthei laticem deceptaque non capiatur,
sed potius tali facto recreata valescat,
sic ego nunc, quoniam haec ratio plerumque videtur
tristior esse quibus non est tractata, retroque
20 vulgus abhorret ab hac, volui tibi suaviloquenti
carmine Pierio rationem exponere nostram
et quasi musaeo dulci contingere melle;
si tibi forte animum tali ratione tenere
versibus in nostris possem, dum percipis omnem
25 naturam rerum ac persentis utilitatem.
Sed quoniam docui cunctarum exordia rerum
qualia sint et quam variis distantia formis
sponte sua volitent aeterno percita motu
quoque modo possit res ex his quaeque creari,
30 nunc agere incipiam tibi quod vehementer ad has res
attinet esse ea quae rerum simulacra vocamus,
quae quasi membranae vel cortex nominandast,
atque animi quoniam docui natura quid esset
et quibus e rebus cum corpore compta vigeret
35 quove modo distracta rediret in ordia prima,
nunc agere incipiam tibi, quod vehementer ad has res
attinet esse ea quae rerum simulacra vocamus,
quod speciem ac formam similem gerit eius imago,
cuius cumque cluet de corpore fusa vagari;
40 quae quasi membranae summo de corpore rerum
dereptae volitant ultroque citroque per auras,

atque eadem nobis vigilantibus obvia mentes
terrificant atque in somnis, cum saepe figuras
contuimur miras simulacraque luce carentum,
45 quae nos horrifice languentis saepe sopore
excierunt ne forte animas Acherunte reamur
effugere aut umbras inter vivos volitare
neve aliquid nostri post mortem posse relinqui,
cum corpus simul atque animi natura perempta
50 in sua discessum dederint primordia quaeque.
dico igitur rerum effigias tenuisque figuras
mittier ab rebus summo de cortice eorum;
id licet hinc quamvis hebeti cognoscere corde.
Principio quoniam mittunt in rebus apertis
55 corpora res multae, partim diffusa solute,
roborum ceu fumum mittunt ignesque vaporem,
et partim contexta magis condensaque, ut olim
cum teretis ponunt tunicas aestate cicadae,
et vituli cum membranas de corpore summo
60 nascentes mittunt, et item cum lubrica serpens
exiit in spinis vestem; nam saepe videmus
illorum spoliis vepres volitantibus auctas.
quae quoniam fiunt, tenuis quoque debet imago
ab rebus mitti summo de corpore rerum.
65 nam cur illa cadant magis ab rebusque recedant
quam quae tenuia sunt, hiscendist nulla potestas;
praesertim cum sint in summis corpora rebus
multa minuta, iaci quae possint ordine eodem
quo fuerint et formam servare figuram,
70 et multo citius, quanto minus indupediri
pauca queunt et quae sunt prima fronte locata.
nam certe iacere ac largiri multa videmus,
non solum ex alto penitusque, ut diximus ante,
verum de summis ipsum quoque saepe colorem.
75 et volgo faciunt id lutea russaque vela
et ferrugina, cum magnis intenta theatris
per malos volgata trabesque trementia flutant;
namque ibi consessum cavearum super et omnem
scaenarum speciem patrum matrumque deorsum
80 inficiunt coguntque suo fluitare colore.
et quanto circum magis sunt inclusa theatri
moenia, tam magis haec intus perfusa lepore
omnia conrident correpta luce diei.
ergo lintea de summo cum corpore fucum
85 mittunt, effigias quoque debent mittere tenvis

res quaeque, ex summo quoniam iaculantur utraque.
sunt igitur iam formarum vestigia certa,
quae volgo volitant subtili praedita filo
nec singillatim possunt secreta videri.

90 Praeterea omnis odor fumus vapor atque aliae res
consimiles ideo diffusae rebus abundant,
ex alto quia dum veniunt extrinsecus ortae
scinduntur per iter flexum, nec recta viarum
ostia sunt, qua contendant exire coortae.

95 at contra tenuis summi membrana coloris
cum iacitur, nihil est quod eam discerpere possit,
in promptu quoniam est in prima fronte locata.
Postremo speculis in aqua splendoreque in omni
quae cumque apparent nobis simulacra, necessest,
100 quandoquidem simili specie sunt praedita rerum,
exin imaginibus missis consistere eorum.

nam cur illa cadant magis ab rebusque recedant
quam quae tenuia sunt, hiscendist nulla potestas.
sunt igitur tenues formarum illis similesque
105 effigiae, singillatim quas cernere nemo
cum possit, tamen adsiduo crebroque repulsu
reiectae reddunt speculorum ex aequore visum,
nec ratione alia servari posse videntur,
tanto opere ut similes reddantur cuique figurae.

110 Nunc age, quam tenui natura constet imago
percepe. et in primis, quoniam primordia tantum
sunt infra nostros sensus tantoque minora
quam quae primum oculi coeptant non posse tueri,
nunc tamen id quoque uti confirmem, exordia rerum
115 cunctarum quam sint subtilia percepe paucis.
primum animalia sunt iam partim tantula, corum
tertia pars nulla possit ratione videri.

horum intestinum quodvis quale esse putandumst!
quid cordis globus aut oculi? quid membra? quid artus?

120 quantula sunt! quid praeterea primordia quaeque,
unde anima atque animi constet natura necessest,
nonne vides quam sint subtilia quamque minuta?
praeterea quaecumque suo de corpore odorem
expirant acrem, panaces absinthia taetra

125 habrotonique graves et tristia centaurea,
quorum unum quidvis leviter si forte duobus

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quin potius noscas rerum simulacra vagari

multa modis multis, nulla vi cassaque sensu?
Sed ne forte putes ea demum sola vagari,
130 quae cumque ab rebus rerum simulacra recedunt,
sunt etiam quae sponte sua gignuntur et ipsa
constituuntur in hoc caelo, qui dicitur aer,
quae multis formata modis sublime feruntur,
ut nubes facile inter dum con crescere in alto
135 cernimus et mundi speciem violare serenam
aëra mulcentes motu; nam saepe Gigantum
ora volare videntur et umbram ducere late,
inter dum magni montes avolsaque saxa
montibus ante ire et solem succedere praeter,
140 inde alios trahere atque inducere belua nimbos.
nec speciem mutare suam liquentia cessant
et cuiusque modi formarum vertere in oras.
Nunc ea quam facili et celeri ratione genantur
perpetuoque fluant ab rebus lapsaque cedant

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145 semper enim summum quicquid de rebus abundat,
quod iaculentur. et hoc alias cum pervenit in res,
transit, ut in primis vestem; sed ubi aspera saxa
aut in materiam ligni pervenit, ibi iam
scinditur, ut nullum simulacrum reddere possit.
150 at cum splendida quae constant opposta fuerunt
densaque, ut in primis speculum est, nihil accidit horum;
nam neque, uti vestem, possunt transire, neque autem
scindi; quam meminit levor praestare salutem.
qua propter fit ut hinc nobis simulacra redundant.
155 et quamvis subito quovis in tempore quamque
rem contra speculum ponas, apparet imago;
perpetuo fluere ut noscas e corpore summo
texturas rerum tenuis tenuisque figuras.
ergo multa brevi spatio simulacra genuntur,
160 ut merito celer his rebus dicatur origo.
et quasi multa brevi spatio summittere debet
lumina sol, ut perpetuo sint omnia plena,
sic ab rebus item simili ratione necessest
temporis in puncto rerum simulacra ferantur
165 multa modis multis in cunctas undique partis;
quandoquidem speculum quo cumque obvertimus oris,
res ibi respondent simili forma atque colore.
Praeterea modo cum fuerit liquidissima caeli
tempestas, perquam subito fit turbida foede,

170 undique uti tenebras omnis Acherunta rearis
liquisse et magnas caeli complesse cavernas.
usque adeo taetra nimborum nocte coorta
inpendent atrae Formidinis ora superne;
quorum quantula pars sit imago dicere nemost
175 qui possit neque eam rationem reddere dictis.
Nunc age, quam celeri motu simulacra ferantur,
et quae mobilitas ollis tranantibus auras
reddita sit, longo spatio ut brevis hora teratur,
in quem quaeque locum diverso numine tendunt,
180 suavidicis potius quam multis versibus edam;
parvus ut est cycni melior canor, ille gruum quam
clamor in aetheriis dispersus nubibus austri.
Principio persaepe levis res atque minutis
corporibus factas celeris licet esse videre.
185 in quo iam genere est solis lux et vapor eius,
propterea quia sunt e primis facta minutis,
quae quasi cuduntur perque aëris intervallum
non dubitant transire sequenti concita plaga;
suppeditatur enim confestim lumine lumen
190 et quasi protelo stimulator fulgere fulgur.
qua propter simulacra pari ratione necessest
inmemorable per spatium transcurrere posse
temporis in puncto, primum quod parvola causa
est procul a tergo quae provehat atque propellat,
195 quod super est, ubi tam volucris levitate ferantur,
deinde quod usque adeo textura praedita rara
mittuntur, facile ut quasvis penetrare queant res
et quasi permanare per aëris intervallum.
Praeterea si quae penitus corpuscula rerum
200 ex altoque foras mittuntur, solis uti lux
ac vapor, haec puncto cernuntur lapsa diei
per totum caeli spatium diffundere sese
perque volare mare ac terras caelumque rigare.
quid quae sunt igitur iam prima fronte parata,
205 cum iaciuntur et emissum res nulla moratur?
quone vides citius debere et longius ire
multiplexque loci spatium transcurrere eodem
tempore quo solis pervolgant lumina caelum?
Hoc etiam in primis specimen verum esse videtur,
210 quam celeri motu rerum simulacra ferantur,
quod simul ac primum sub diu splendor aquai
ponitur, extemplo caelo stellante serena
sidera respondent in aqua radiantia mundi.

iamne vides igitur quam puncto tempore imago
215 aetheris ex oris in terrarum accidat oras?
quare etiam atque etiam mitti fateare necessest
corpora quae feriant oculos visumque lacescant.
perpetuoque fluunt certis ab rebus odores,
frigus ut a fluviis, calor ab sole, aestus ab undis
220 aequoris, exesor moerorum litora circum,
nec variae cessant voces volitare per auras.
denique in os salsi venit umor saepe saporis,
cum mare versamur propter, dilutaque contra
cum tuimur misceri absinthia, tangit amaror.
225 usque adeo omnibus ab rebus res quaeque fluenter
fertur et in cunctas dimittitur undique partis
nec mora nec requies interdatur ulla fluendi,
perpetuo quoniam sentimus et omnia semper
cernere odorari licet et sentire sonare.
230 Praeterea quoniam manibus tractata figura
in tenebris quaedam cognoscitur esse eadem quae
cernitur in luce et claro candore, necessest
consimili causa tactum visumque moveri.
nunc igitur si quadratum temptamus et id nos
235 commovet in tenebris, in luci quae poterit res
accidere ad speciem quadrata, nisi eius imago?
esse in imaginibus qua propter causa videtur
cernundi neque posse sine his res ulla videri.
Nunc ea quae dico rerum simulacra feruntur
240 undique et in cunctas iaciuntur didita partis;
verum nos oculis quia solis cernere quimus,
propterea fit uti, speciem quo vertimus, omnes
res ibi eam contra feriant forma atque colore.
et quantum quaeque ab nobis res absit, imago
245 efficit ut videamus et internoscere curat;
nam cum mittitur, extemplo protrudit agitque
aëra qui inter se cumque est oculosque locatus,
isque ita per nostras acies perlabitur omnis
et quasi perterget pupillas atque ita transit.
250 propterea fit uti videamus quam procul absit
res quaeque. et quanto plus aëris ante agitur
et nostros oculos perterget longior aura,
tam procul esse magis res quaeque remota videtur.
scilicet haec summe celeri ratione geruntur,
255 quale sit ut videamus, et una quam procul absit.
Illud in his rebus minime mirabile habendumst,
cur, ea quae feriant oculos simulacra videri

singula cum nequeant, res ipsae perspiciantur.
ventus enim quoque paulatim cum verberat et cum
260 acre fluit frigus, non privam quamque solemus
particulam venti sentire et frigoris eius,
sed magis unorsum, fierique perinde videmus
corpore tum plagas in nostro tam quam aliquae res
verberet atque sui det sensum corporis extra.
265 praeterea lapidem digito cum tundimus, ipsum
tangimus extremum saxi summumque colorem
nec sentimus eum tactu, verum magis ipsam
duritiem penitus saxi sentimus in alto.
Nunc age, cur ultra speculum videatur imago
270 percipe: nam certe penitus remmota videtur.
quod genus illa foris quae vere transpiciuntur,
ianua cum per se transpectum praebet apertum,
multa facitque foris ex aedibus ut videantur;
is quoque enim duplici geminoque fit aëre visus.
275 primus enim citra postes tum cernitur aër,
inde fores ipsae dextra laevaue secuntur,
post extraria lux oculos perterget et aër
alter, et illa foris quae vere transpiciuntur.
sic ubi se primum speculi proiecit imago,
280 dum venit ad nostras acies, protrudit agitque
aëra qui inter se cumquest oculosque locatus,
et facit, ut prius hunc omnem sentire queamus
quam speculum; sed ubi in speculum quoque sensimus ipsum,
continuo a nobis in eum quae fertur imago
285 pervenit, et nostros oculos reiecta revisit
atque alium prae se propellens aëra volvit,
et facit ut prius hunc quam se videamus, eoque
distare ab speculo tantum semota videtur.
quare etiam atque etiam minime mirarier est par

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290 illis quae reddunt speculorum ex aequore visum,
aëribus binis quoniam res confit utraque.
Nunc ea quae nobis membrorum dextera pars est,
in speculis fit ut in laeva videatur eo quod
planitiem ad speculi veniens cum offendit imago,
295 non convertitur incolumis, sed recta retrorsum
sic eliditur, ut siquis, prius arida quam sit
cretea persona, adlidat pilaeve trabive,
atque ea continuo rectam si fronte figuram
servet et elisam retro sese exprimat ipsa.

300 fiet ut, ante oculus fuerit qui dexter, ut idem
nunc sit laevus et e laevo sit mutua dexter.
Fit quoque de speculo in speculum ut tradatur imago,
quinque etiam aut sex ut fieri simulacra suerint.
nam quae cumque retro parte interiore latebunt,
305 inde tamen, quamvis torte penitusque remota,
omnia per flexos aditus educta licebit
pluribus haec speculis videantur in aedibus esse.
usque adeo speculo in speculum translucet imago,
et cum laeva data est, fit rursus ut dextera fiat,
310 inde retro rursus redit et convertit eodem.
Quin etiam quae cumque latuscula sunt speculorum
adsimili lateris flexura praedita nostri,
dextera ea propter nobis simulacra remittunt,
aut quia de speculo in speculum transfertur imago,
315 inde ad nos elisa bis advolat, aut etiam quod
circum agitur, cum venit, imago propterea quod
flexa figura docet speculi convertier ad nos.
Indugredi porro pariter simulacra pedemque
ponere nobiscum credas gestumque imitari
320 propterea quia, de speculi qua parte recedas,
continuo nequeunt illinc simulacra reverti;
omnia quandoquidem cogit natura referri
ac resilire ab rebus ad aequos reddita flexus.
Splendida porro oculi fugitant vitantque tueri.
325 sol etiam caecat, contra si tendere pergas,
propterea quia vis magnast ipsius et alte
aëra per purum simulacra feruntur
et feriunt oculos turbantia composituras.
Praeterea splendor qui cumque est acer adurit
330 saepe oculos ideo quod semina possidet ignis
multa, dolorem oculis quae gignunt insinuando.
lurida praeterea fiunt quae cumque tuentur
arquati, quia luroris de corpore eorum
semina multa fluunt simulacris obvia rerum,
335 multaque sunt oculis in eorum denique mixta,
quae contage sua palloribus omnia pingunt.
E tenebris autem quae sunt in luce tuemur
propterea quia, cum propior caliginis aër
ater init oculos prior et possedit apertos,
340 insequitur candens confestim lucidus aër,
qui quasi purgat eos ac nigras discutit umbras
aëris illius; nam multis partibus hic est
mobilius multisque minutior et magis pollens.

qui simul atque vias oculorum luce replevit
345 atque pate fecit, quas ante obsederat aër
ATER, continuo rerum simulacra secuntur,
quae sita sunt in luce, lacescuntque ut videamus.
quod contra facere in tenebris e luce nequimus
propterea quia posterior caliginis aër
350 crassior insequitur, qui cuncta foramina complet
obsiditque vias oculorum, ne simulacra
possint ullarum rerum coniecta moveri.
Quadratasque procul turris cum cernimus urbis,
propterea fit uti videantur saepe rutundae,
355 angulus optusus quia longe cernitur omnis
sive etiam potius non cernitur ac perit eius
plaga nec ad nostras acies perlabitur ictus,
aëra per multum quia dum simulacra feruntur,
cogit hebescere eum crebris offensibus aër.
360 hoc ubi suffugit sensum simul angulus omnis.
fit quasi ut ad turnum saxorum structa tuantur;
non tamen ut coram quae sunt vereque rutunda,
sed quasi adumbratim paulum simulata videntur.
Umbra videtur item nobis in sole moveri
365 et vestigia nostra sequi gestumque imitari,
aëra si credis privatum lumine posse
indugredi, motus hominum gestumque sequentem;
nam nihil esse potest aliud nisi lumine cassus
aër id quod nos umbram perhibere suëmus.
370 ni mirum, quia terra locis ex ordine certis
lumine privatur solis qua cumque meantes
officimus, repletur item quod liquimus eius,
propterea fit uti videatur, quae fuit umbra
corporis, e regione eadem nos usque secuta.
375 semper enim nova se radiorum lumina fundunt
primaque dispereunt, quasi in ignem lana trahatur.
propterea facile et spoliatur lumine terra
et repletur item nigrasque sibi abluit umbras.
Nec tamen hic oculos falli concedimus hilum.
380 nam quo cumque loco sit lux atque umbra tueri
illorum est; eadem vero sint lumina necne,
umbraque quae fuit hic eadem nunc transeat illuc,
an potius fiat paulo quod diximus ante,
hoc animi demum ratio discernere debet,
385 nec possunt oculi naturam noscere rerum.
proinde animi vitium hoc oculis adfingere noli.
Qua vehimur navi, fertur, cum stare videtur;

quae manet in statione, ea praeter creditur ire.
et fugere ad puppim colles campique videntur,
390 quos agimus praeter navem velisque volamus.

Sidera cessare aetheriis adfixa cavernis
cuncta videntur, et adsiduo sunt omnia motu,
quandoquidem longos obitus exorta revisunt,
cum permensa suo sunt caelum corpore claro.

395 solque pari ratione manere et luna videtur
in statione, ea quae ferri res indicat ipsa.

Exstantisque procul medio de gurgite montis
classibus inter quos liber patet exitus ingens,
insula coniunctis tamen ex his una videtur.

400 atria versari et circum cursare columnae
usque adeo fit uti pueris videantur, ubi ipsi
desierunt verti, vix ut iam credere possint
non supra sese ruere omnia tecta minari.

Iamque rubrum tremulis iubar ignibus erigere alte
405 cum coepat natura supraque extollere montes,
quos tibi tum supra sol montis esse videtur
comminus ipse suo contingens fervidus igni,
vix absunt nobis missus bis mille sagittae,
vix etiam cursus quingentos saepe veruti;

410 inter eos solemque iacent immania ponti
aequora substrata aetheriis ingentibus oris,
interiectaque sunt terrarum milia multa,
quae variae retinent gentes et saecla ferarum.

At coniectus aquae digitum non altior unum,

415 qui lapides inter sistit per strata viarum,
despectum praebet sub terras inpete tanto,
a terris quantum caeli patet altus hiatus,
nubila despicere et caelum ut videre videre,
corpora mirande sub terras abdita caelo.

420 Denique ubi in medio nobis ecus acer obhaesit
flumine et in rapidas amnis despeximus undas,
stantis equi corpus transversum ferre videtur
vis et in adversum flumen contrudere raptim,
et quo cumque oculos traiecimus omnia ferri
425 et fluere adsimili nobis ratione videntur.

Porticus aequali quamvis est denique ductu
stansque in perpetuum paribus suffulta columnis,
longa tamen parte ab summa cum tota videtur,
paulatim trahit angusti fastigia coni,

430 tecta solo iungens atque omnia dextera laevis
donec in obscurum coni conduxit acumen.

In pelago nautis ex undis ortus in undis
sol fit uti videatur obire et condere lumen;
quippe ubi nil aliud nisi aquam caelumque tuentur;
335 ne leviter credas labefactari undique sensus.
at maris ignaris in portu clauda videntur
navigia aplustris fractis obnitier undis.
nam quae cumque supra rorem salis edita pars est
remorum, recta est, et recta superne gubernata;
340 quae demersa liquore obeunt, refracta videntur
omnia converti sursumque supina reverti
et reflexa prope in summo fluitare liquore.
Raraque per caelum cum venti nubila portant
tempore nocturno, tum splendida signa videntur
345 labier adversum nimbos atque ire superne
longe aliam in partem ac vera ratione feruntur
At si forte oculo manus uni subdita supter
pressit eum, quodam sensu fit uti videantur
omnia quae tuimur fieri tum bina tuendo,
350 bina lucernarum florentia lumina flammis
binaque per totas aedis geminare supellex
et duplicis hominum facies et corpora bina.
Denique cum suavi devinxit membra sopore
sognus et in summa corpus iacet omne quiete,
355 tum vigilare tamen nobis et membra movere
nostra videmur, et in noctis caligine caeca
cernere censemus solem lumenque diurnum,
conclusoque loco caelum mare flumina montis
mutare et campos pedibus transire videmur,
360 et sonitus audire, severa silentia noctis
undique cum constant, et reddere dicta tacentes.
Cetera de genere hoc mirande multa videmus,
quae violare fidem quasi sensibus omnia quaerunt,
ne quiquam, quoniam pars horum maxima fallit
365 propter opinatus animi, quos addimus ipsi,
pro visis ut sint quae non sunt sensibus visa;
nam nihil aegrius est quam res discernere apertas
ab dubiis, animus quas ab se protinus addit.
Denique nil sciri si quis putat, id quoque nescit
370 an sciri possit, quoniam nil scire fatetur.
hunc igitur contra minuam contendere causam,
qui capite ipse suo in statuit vestigia sese.
et tamen hoc quoque uti concedam scire, at id ipsum
quaeram, cum in rebus veri nil viderit ante,
375 unde sciat quid sit scire et nescire vicissim,

notitiam veri quae res falsique crearit
et dubium certo quae res differre probarit.
invenies primis ab sensibus esse creatam
notitiam veri neque sensus posse refelli.
480 nam maiore fide debet reperiri illud,
sponte sua veris quod possit vincere falsa.
quid maiore fide porro quam sensus haberi
debet? an ab sensu falso ratio orta valebit
dicere eos contra, quae tota ab sensibus orta est?
485 qui nisi sunt veri, ratio quoque falsa fit omnis.
An poterunt oculos aures reprehendere, an aures
tactus? an hunc porro tactum sapor arguet oris,
an confutabunt nares oculive revincent?
non, ut opinor, ita est. nam seorsum cuique potestas
490 divisast, sua vis cuiquest, ideoque necesse est
et quod molle sit et gelidum fervensve videre
et seorsum varios rerum sentire colores
et quae cumque coloribus sint coniuncta necessest.
seorsus item sapor oris habet vim, seorsus odores
495 nascuntur, seorsus sonitus. ideoque necesse est
non possint alios alii convincere sensus.
nec porro poterunt ipsi reprehendere sese,
aequa fides quoniam debebit semper haberi.
proinde quod in quoquest his visum tempore, verumst.
500 Et si non poterit ratio dissolvere causam,
cur ea quae fuerint iuxtim quadrata, procul sint
visa rutunda, tamen praestat rationis egentem
reddere mendose causas utriusque figurae,
quam manibus manifesta suis emittere quoquam
505 et violare fidem primam et convellere tota
fundamenta quibus nixatur vita salusque.
non modo enim ratio ruat omnis, vita quoque ipsa
concidat extemplo, nisi credere sensibus ausis
praecipitisque locos vitare et cetera quae sint
510 in genere hoc fugienda, sequi contraria quae sint.
illa tibi est igitur verborum copia cassa
omnis, quae contra sensus instructa paratast.
Denique ut in fabrica, si pravast regula prima,
normaque si fallax rectis regionibus exit,
515 et libella aliqua si ex parti claudicat hilum,
omnia mendose fieri atque obstipa necessu est
prava cubantia prona supina atque absona tecta,
iam ruere ut quaedam videantur velle, ruantque
prodita iudiciis fallacibus omnia primis,

520 sic igitur ratio tibi rerum prava necessest
falsaque sit, falsis quae cumque ab sensibus ortast.
Nunc alii sensus quo pacto quisque suam rem
sentiat, haud quaquam ratio scruposa relictæ est.
Principio auditur sonus et vox omnis, in auris
525 insinuata suo pepulere ubi corpore sensum.
corpoream quoque enim vocem constare fatendumst
et sonitum, quoniam possunt inpellere sensus.
Praeterea radit vox fauces saepe facitque
asperiora foras gradiens arteria clamor,
530 quippe per angustum turba maiore coorta
ire foras ubi coeperunt primordia vocum.
scilicet expletis quoque ianua raditur oris.
haud igitur dubiumst quin voces verbaque constant
corporeis e principiis, ut laedere possint.
535 nec te fallit item quid corporis auferat et quid
detrahat ex hominum nervis ac viribus ipsis
perpetuus sermo nigrae noctis ad umbram
auroræ perductus ab exoriente nitore,
praesertim si cum summost clamore profusus.
540 ergo corpoream vocem constare necessest,
multa loquens quoniam amittit de corpore partem.
Asperitas autem vocis fit ab asperitate
principiorum et item levor levore creatur;
nec simili penetrant auris primordia forma,
545 cum tuba depresso graviter sub murmure mugit
et reboat raucum retro cita barbita bombum,
et iam Dauliades natae hortis ex Heliconis
cum liquidam tollunt lugubri voce querellam.
Hasce igitur penitus voces cum corpore nostro
550 exprimimus rectoque foras emittimus ore,
mobilis articulatur nervorum daedala lingua,
formaturaque laborum pro parte figurat.
hoc ubi non longum spatiumst unde illa profecta
perveniat vox quaeque, necessest verba quoque ipsa
555 plane exaudiri discernique articulatim;
servat enim formaturam servatque figuram.
at si inter positum spatium sit longius aequo,
aëra per multum confundi verba necessest
et conturbari vocem, dum transvolat auras.
560 ergo fit, sonitum ut possis sentire neque illam
internoscere, verborum sententia quae sit;
usque adeo confusa venit vox inque pedita.
Praeterea verbum saepe unum perciet auris

omnibus in populo missum praeconis ab ore.

565 in multas igitur voces vox una repente
diffugit, in privas quoniam se dividit auris
obsignans formam verbis clarumque sonorem.
at quae pars vocum non auris incidit ipsas,
praeter lata perit frustra diffusa per auras.

570 pars solidis adlisa locis reiecta sonorem
reddit et inter dum frustratur imagine verbi.
Quae bene cum videas, rationem reddere possis
tute tibi atque aliis, quo pacto per loca sola
saxa paris formas verborum ex ordine reddant.

575 palantis comites com montis inter opacos
quaerimus et magna dispersos voce ciemus.
sex etiam aut septem loca vidi reddere vocis,
unam cum iaceres: ita colles collibus ipsi
verba repulsantes iterabant dicta referri.

580 haec loca capripedes Satyros Nymphasque tenere
finitimi fingunt et Faunos esse locuntur,
quorum noctivago strepitu ludoque iocanti
adfirmant volgo taciturna silentia rumpi
chordarumque sonos fieri dulcisque querellas,
585 tibia quas fundit digitis pulsata canentum,
et genus agricolum late sentiscere, quom Pan
pineae semiferi capitis velamina quassans
unco saepe labro calamos percurrit hiantis,
fistula silvestrem ne cesset fundere musam.

590 cetera de genere hoc monstra ac portenta loquuntur,
ne loca deserta ab divis quoque forte putentur
sola tenere. ideo iactant miracula dictis
aut aliqua ratione alia ducuntur, ut omne
humanum genus est avidum nimis auricularum.

595 Quod super est, non est mirandum qua ratione,
per loca quae nequeunt oculi res cernere apertas,
haec loca per voces veniant aurisque lacessant,
conloquium clausis foribus quoque saepe videmus;
ni mirum quia vox per flexa foramina rerum

600 incolumis transire potest, simulacra renutant;
perscinduntur enim, nisi recta foramina tranant,
qualia sunt vitrei, species qua travolat omnis.
praeterea partis in cunctas dividitur vox,
ex aliis aliae quoniam gignuntur, ubi una
605 dissuluit semel in multas exorta, quasi ignis
saepe solet scintilla suos se spargere in ignis.
ergo replentur loca vocibus abdita retro,

omnia quae circum fervunt sonituque cientur.
at simulacra viis directis omnia tendunt,
610 ut sunt missa semel; qua propter cernere nemo
saepe supra potis est, at voces accipere extra.
et tamen ipsa quoque haec, dum transit clausa domorum
vox optunditur atque auris confusa penetrat
et sonitum potius quam verba audire videmur.

615 Hoc, qui sentimus sucum, lingua atque palatum
plusculum habent in se rationis, plus operai.
principio sucum sentimus in ore, cibum cum
mandendo exprimimus, ceu plenam spongiam aquai
siquis forte manu premere ac siccare coëpit.

620 inde quod exprimimus per caulas omne palati
diditur et rariae per flexa foramina linguae,
hoc ubi levia sunt manantis corpora suci,
suaviter attingunt et suaviter omnia tractant
umida linguae circum sudantia templa;

625 at contra pungunt sensum lacerantque coorta,
quanto quaeque magis sunt asperitate repleta.
deinde voluptas est e suco fine palati;
cum vero deorsum per fauces praecipitavit,
nulla voluptas est, dum diditur omnis in artus;

630 nec refert quicquam quo victu corpus alatur,
dum modo quod capias concoctum didere possis
artubus et stomachi tumidum servare tenorem.

Nunc aliis alius qui sit cibus ut videamus,
expediam, quareve, aliis quod triste et amarumst,

635 hoc tamen esse aliis possit perdulce videri,
tantaque in his rebus distantia differitasque est,
ut quod aliis cibus est aliis fuit acre venenum;
est itaque ut serpens, hominis quae tacta salivis
disperit ac sese mandendo conficit ipsa.

640 praeterea nobis veratrum est acre venenum,
at capris adipēs et cocturnicibus auget.

id quibus ut fiat rebus cognoscere possis,
principio meminisse decet quae diximus ante,
semina multimodis in rebus mixta teneri.

645 porro omnes quae cumque cibum capiunt animantes,
ut sunt dissimiles extrinsecus et generatim
extima membrorum circumcaesura coërcet,
proinde et seminibus constant variantque figura.
semina cum porro distent, differre necessest

650 intervalla viasque, foramina quae perhibemus,
omnibus in membris et in ore ipsoque palato.

esse minora igitur quaedam maioraque debent,
esse triquetra aliis, aliis quadrata necessest,
multa rutunda, modis multis multangula quaedam.
655 namque figurarum ratio ut motusque reposcunt,
proinde foraminibus debent differe figurae
et variare viae proinde ac textura coërcet.
hoc ubi quod suave est aliis aliis fit amarum,
illi, cui suave est, levissima corpora debent
660 contractabiliter caulas intrare palati,
at contra quibus est eadem res intus acerba,
aspera ni mirum penetrant hamataque fauces.
nunc facile est ex his rebus cognoscere quaeque.
quippe ubi cui febris bili superante coorta est
665 aut alia ratione aliquast vis excita morbi,
perturbatur ibi iam totum corpus et omnes
commutantur ibi positurae principiorum;
fit prius ad sensum ut quae corpora conveniebant
nunc non convenient, et cetera sint magis apta,
670 quae penetrata queunt sensum progignere acerbum;
utraque enim sunt in mellis commixta sapore;
id quod iam supera tibi saepe ostendimus ante.
Nunc age, quo pacto naris adiectus odoris
tangat agam. primum res multas esse necessest
675 unde fluens volvat varius se fluctus odorum,
et fluere et mitti volgo spargique putandumst;
verum aliis alius magis est animantibus aptus,
dissimilis propter formas. ideoque per auras
mellis apes quamvis longe ducuntur odore,
680 volturique cadaveribus; tum fissa ferarum
ungula quo tulerit gressum promissa canum vis
ducit, et humanum longe praesentit odorem
Romulidarum arcis servator, candidus anser.
sic aliis alius nidor datus ad sua quemque
685 pabula ducit et a taetro resilire veneno
cogit, eoque modo servantur saecula ferarum.
Hic odor ipse igitur, naris qui cumque lacessit,
est alio ut possit permitti longius alter;
sed tamen haud quisquam tam longe fertur eorum
690 quam sonitus, quam vox, mitto iam dicere quam res
quae feriunt oculorum acies visumque lacessunt.
errabundus enim tarde venit ac perit ante
paulatim facilis distractus in aëris auras;
ex alto primum quia vix emittitur ex re;
695 nam penitus fluere atque recedere rebus odores

significat quod fracta magis redolere videntur
omnia, quod contrita, quod igni conlabefacta.
deinde videre licet maioribus esse creatum
principiis quam vox, quoniam per saxea saepta
700 non penetrat, qua vox volgo sonitusque feruntur.
quare etiam quod olet non tam facile esse videbis
investigare in qua sit regione locatum;
refrigescit enim cunctando plaga per auras
nec calida ad sensum decurrunt nuntia rerum.
705 errant saepe canes itaque et vestigia quaerunt.
Nec tamen hoc solis in odoribus atque saporum
in generest, sed item species rerum atque colores
non ita conveniunt ad sensus omnibus omnes,
ut non sint aliis quaedam magis acria visu.
710 quin etiam gallum noctem explaudentibus alis
auroram clara consuetum voce vocare,
noenu queunt rapidi contra constare leones
inque tueri: ita continuo meminere fugai.
ni mirum quia sunt gallorum in corpore quaedam
715 semina, quae cum sunt oculis inmissa leonum,
pupillas interfodiunt acremque dolorem
praebent, ut nequeant contra durare feroces,
cum tamen haec nostras acies nil laedere possint,
aut quia non penetrant aut quod penetrantibus illis
720 exitus ex oculis liber datur, in remorando
laedere ne possint ex ulla lumina parte.
Nunc age, quae moveant animum res accipe, et unde
quae veniunt veniant in mentem percipe paucis.
principio hoc dico, rerum simulacra vagari
725 multa modis multis in cunctas undique partis
tenvia, quae facile inter se iunguntur in auris,
obvia cum veniunt, ut aranea bratteaque auri.
quippe etenim multo magis haec sunt tenvia textu
quam quae percipiunt oculos visumque lacessunt,
730 corporis haec quoniam penetrant per rara cientque
tenvem animi naturam intus sensumque lacessunt.
Centauros itaque et Scyllarum membra videmus
Cerbereasque canum facies simulacraque eorum
quorum morte obita tellus amplectitur ossa;
735 omnigenus quoniam passim simulacra feruntur,
partim sponte sua quae fiunt aëre in ipso,
partim quae variis ab rebus cumque recedunt
et quae confiunt ex horum facta figuris.
nam certe ex vivo Centauri non fit imago,

740 nulla fuit quoniam talis natura animata;
verum ubi equi atque hominis casu convenit imago,
haerescit facile extemplo, quod diximus ante,
propter subtilem naturam et tenvia texta.
cetera de genere hoc eadem ratione creantur.

745 quae cum mobiliter summa levitate feruntur,
ut prius ostendi, facile uno commovet ictu
quae libet una animum nobis subtilis imago;
tensis enim mens est et mire mobilis ipsa.
haec fieri ut memoro, facile hinc cognoscere possis.

750 quatinus hoc simile est illi, quod mente videmus
atque oculis, simili fieri ratione necessest.
Nunc igitur docui quoniam me forte leonum
cernere per simulacra, oculos quae cumque lacessunt,
scire licet mentem simili ratione moveri

755 per simulacra leonum et cetera quae videt aequae
nec minus atque oculi, nisi quod magis tenvia cernit.
nec ratione alia, cum somnus membra profudit,
mens animi vigilat, nisi quod simulacra lacessunt
haec eadem nostros animos quae cum vigilamus,

760 usque adeo, certe ut videamur cernere eum quem
rellicta vita iam mors et terra potitast.
hoc ideo fieri cogit natura, quod omnes
corporis effecti sensus per membra quiescunt
nec possunt falsum veris convincere rebus.

765 praeterea meminisse iacet languetque sopore,
nec dissentit eum mortis letique potitum
iam pridem, quem mens vivom se cernere credit.
quod super est, non est mirum simulacra moveri
brachiaque in numerum iactare et cetera membra;

770 nam fit ut in somnis facere hoc videatur imago.
quippe, ubi prima perit alioque est altera nata
inde statu, prior hic gestum mutasse videtur.
scilicet id fieri celeri ratione putandumst:

tanta est mobilitas et rerum copia tanta
775 tantaque sensibili quovis est tempore in uno
copia particularum, ut possit suppeditare.

Multaque in his rebus quaeruntur multaque nobis
clarandumst, plane si res exponere avemus.

quaeritur in primis quare, quod cuique libido
780 venerit, extemplo mens cogitet eius id ipsum.
anne voluntatem nostram simulacra tuentur
et simul ac volumus nobis occurrit imago,
si mare, si terram cordist, si denique caelum?

conventus hominum, pompam, convivium, pugnas,
785 omnia sub verbone creat natura paratque?
cum praesertim aliis eadem in regione locoque
longe dissimilis animus res cogitet omnis.
quid porro, in numerum procedere cum simulacra
cernimus in somnis et mollia membra movere,
790 mollia mobiliter cum alternis brachia mittunt
et repetunt oculis gestum pede convenienti?
scilicet arte madent simulacra et docta vagantur,
nocturno facere ut possint in tempore ludos.
an magis illud erit verum? quia tempore in uno,
795 cum sentimus, id est cum vox emittitur una,
tempora multa latent, ratio quae comperit esse,
propterea fit uti quovis in tempore quaeque
praesto sint simulacra locis in quisque parata.
tanta est mobilitas et rerum copia tanta.
800 hoc ubi prima perit alioque est altera nata
inde statu, prior hic gestum mutasse videtur.
et quia tenvia sunt, nisi quae contendit, acute
cernere non potis est animus; proinde omnia quae sunt
praeterea pereunt, nisi quae ex sese ipse paravit.
805 ipse parat sese porro speratque futurum
ut videat quod consequitur rem quamque: fit ergo.
nonne vides oculos etiam, cum tenvia quae sunt
praeterea pereunt, nisi quae ex se ipse paravit
cernere coeperunt, contendere se atque parare,
810 nec sine eo fieri posse ut cernamus acute?
et tamen in rebus quoque apertis noscere possis,
si non advertas animum, proinde esse quasi omni
tempore semotum fuerit longeque remotum.
cur igitur mirumst, animus si cetera perdit
815 praeter quam quibus est in rebus deditus ipse?
deinde adopinamur de signis maxima parvis
ac nos in fraudem induimus frustraminis ipsi.
Fit quoque ut inter dum non suppeditetur imago
eiusdem generis, sed femina quae fuit ante,
820 in manibus vir uti factus videatur adesse,
aut alia ex alia facies aetasque sequatur.
quod ne miremur sopor atque oblivia curant.
Illud in his rebus vitium vehementer Änesse
effugere errorem vitareque praemetuenter,
825 lumina ne facias oculorum clara creata,
prospicere ut possimus, et ut proferre queamus
proceros passus, ideo fastigia posse

surarum ac feminum pedibus fundata plicari,
bracchia tum porro validis ex apta lacertis
830 esse manusque datas utraque ex parte ministras,
ut facere ad vitam possemus quae foret usus.
cetera de genere hoc inter quae cumque pretantur,
omnia perversa praepostera sunt ratione,
nil ideo quoniam natumst in corpore ut uti
835 possemus, sed quod natumst id procreat usum.
nec fuit ante videre oculorum lumina nata,
nec dictis orare prius quam lingua creatast,
sed potius longe linguae praecessit origo
sermonem multoque creatae sunt prius aures
840 quam sonus est auditus, et omnia denique membra
ante fuere, ut opinor, eorum quam foret usus;
haud igitur potuere utendi crescere causa.
at contra conferre manu certamina pugnae
et lacerare artus foedareque membra cruore
845 ante fuit multo quam lucida tela volarent,
et volnus vitare prius natura coëgit
quam daret obiectum parmai laeva per artem.
scilicet et fessum corpus mandare quieti
multo antiquius est quam lecti mollia strata,
850 et sedare sitim prius est quam pocula natum.
haec igitur possunt utendi cognita causa
credier, ex usu quae sunt vitaque reperta.
illa quidem seorsum sunt omnia, quae prius ipsa
nata dedere suae post notitiam utilitatis.
855 quo genere in primis sensus et membra videmus;
quare etiam atque etiam procul est ut credere possis
utilitatis ob officium potuisse creari.
Illud item non est mirandum, corporis ipsa
quod natura cibum quaerit cuiusque animantis.
860 quippe etenim fluere atque recedere corpora rebus
multa modis multis docui, sed plurima debent
ex animalibus; quae quia sunt exercita motu,
multa per os exhalantur, cum languida anhelant,
multaque per sudorem ex alto pressa feruntur.
865 his igitur rebus rarescit corpus et omnis
subruitur natura, dolor quam consequitur rem.
propterea capitur cibus, ut suffulciat artus
et recreet vires inter datus, atque patentem
per membra ac venas ut amorem opturet edendi.
870 umor item discedit in omnia quae loca cumque
poscunt umorem; glomerataque multa vaporis

corpora, quae stomacho praebent incendia nostro,
dissupat adveniens liquor ac restinguit ut ignem,
urere ne possit calor amplius aridus artus.

875 sic igitur tibi anhela sitis de corpore nostro
abluitur, sic expletur ieiuna cupido.

Nunc qui fiat uti passus proferre queamus,
cum volumus, quareque datum sit membra movere
et quae res tantum hoc oneris protrudere nostri

880 corporis insuerit, dicam: tu percipe dicta.
dico animo nostro primum simulacra meandi
accidere atque animum pulsare, ut diximus ante.
inde voluntas fit; neque enim facere incipit ullam
rem quisquam, quam mens providit quid velit ante.

885 id quod providet, illius rei constat imago,
ergo animus cum sese ita commovet ut velit ire
inque gredi, ferit extemplo quae in corpore toto
per membra atque artus animai dissita vis est;
et facilest factu, quoniam coniuncta tenetur.

890 inde ea proporro corpus ferit, atque ita tota
paulatim moles protruditur atque movetur.
praeterea tum rarescit quoque corpus et aër,
scilicet ut debet qui semper mobilis extat,
per patefacta venit penetratque foramina largus,

895 et dispargitur ad partis ita quasque minutas
corporis. hic igitur rebus fit utrimque duabus,
corpus ut ac navis velis ventoque feratur.
nec tamen illud in his rebus mirabile constat,

tantula quod tantum corpus corpuscula possunt
900 contorquere et onus totum convertere nostrum;

quippe etenim ventus subtili corpore tenvis
trudit agens magnam magno molimine navem
et manus una regit quanto vis impete euntem
atque gubernaculum contorquet quo libet unum,

905 multaque per trocleas et tympana pondere magno
commovet atque levi sustollit machina nisu.

Nunc quibus ille modis somnus per membra quietem
inriget atque animi curas e pectore solvat,
suavidicis potius quom multis versibus edam,

910 parvus ut est cyni melior canor, ille gruum quam
clamor in aetheriis dispersus nubibus austri.
tu mihi da tenuis auris animumque sagacem,
ne fieri negites quae dicam posse retroque
vera repulsanti discedas pectore dicta,

915 tutemet in culpa cum sis neque cernere possis.

Principio somnus fit ubi est distracta per artus
vis animae partimque foras eiecta recessit
et partim contrusa magis concessit in altum;
dissoluuntur enim tum demum membra fluuntque.

920 nam dubium non est, animai quin opera sit
sensus hic in nobis, quem cum sopor inpedit esse,
tum nobis animam perturbatam esse putandumst
eiectamque foras, non omnem; namque iaceret
aeterno corpus perfusum frigore leti.

925 quippe ubi nulla latens animai pars remaneret
in membris, cinere ut multa latet obrutus ignis,
unde reconfliari sensus per membra repente
possit, ut ex igni caeco consurgere flamma?

Sed quibus haec rebus novitas confiat et unde

930 perturbari anima et corpus languescere possit,
expediam: tu fac ne ventis verba profundam.

Principio externa corpus de parte necessum est,
aëriis quoniam vicinum tangitur auris,
tundier atque eius crebro pulsarier ictu,

935 proptereaue fere res omnes aut corio sunt
aut etiam conchis aut callo aut cortice tectae.

interiorem etiam partem spirantibus aër
verberat hic idem, cum ducitur atque reflatur.

quare utrimque secus cum corpus vapulet et cum

940 perveniant plagae per parva foramina nobis
corporis ad primas partis elementaque prima,
fit quasi paulatim nobis per membra ruina.

conturbantur enim positurae principiorum
corporis atque animi. fit uti pars inde animai

945 eliciatur et introrsum pars abdita cedat,
pars etiam distracta per artus non queat esse
coniuncta inter se neque motu mutua fungi;
inter enim saepit coetus natura viasque.

ergo sensus abit mutatis motibus alte.

950 et quoniam non est quasi quod suffulciat artus,
debile fit corpus languescuntque omnia membra,
bracchia palpebraeque cadunt poplitesque cubanti
saepe tamen summittuntur virisque resolvunt.

Deinde cibum sequitur somnus, quia, quae facit aër,

955 haec eadem cibus, in venas dum diditur omnis,
efficit. et multo sopor ille gravissimus exstat,
quem satur aut lassus capias, quia plurima tum se
corpora conturbant magno contusa labore.

fit ratione eadem coniectus parte animai

960 altior atque foras eiectus largior eius,
et divisor inter se ac distractior intus.
Et quo quisque fere studio devinctus adhaeret
aut quibus in rebus multum sumus ante morati
atque in ea ratione fuit contenta magis mens,
965 in somnis eadem plerumque videmur obire:
causidici causas agere et componere leges,
induperatores pugnare ac proelia obire,
nautae contractum cum ventis degere bellum,
nos agere hoc autem et naturam quaerere rerum
970 semper et inventam patriis exponere chartis.
cetera sic studia atque artes plerumque videntur
in somnis animos hominum frustrata tenere.
et qui cumque dies multos ex ordine ludis
adsiduas dederunt operas, plerumque videmus,
975 cum iam destiterunt ea sensibus usurpare,
relicuas tamen esse vias in mente patentis,
qua possint eadem rerum simulacra venire;
per multos itaque illa dies eadem obversantur
ante oculos, etiam vigilantes ut videantur
980 cernere saltantis et mollia membra moventis
et citharae liquidum carmen chordasque loquentis
auribus accipere et consessum cernere eundem
scenaique simul varios splendere decores.
usque adeo magni refert studium atque voluntas,
985 et quibus in rebus consuerint esse operati
non homines solum sed vero animalia cuncta.
quippe videbis equos fortis, cum membra iacebunt,
in somnis sudare tamen spirareque semper
et quasi de palma summas contendere viris
990 aut quasi carceribus patefactis edere voces
venantumque canes in molli saepe quiete
iactant crura tamen subito vocisque repente
mittunt et crebro redducunt naribus auras.
ut vestigia si teneant inventa ferarum,
995 expergefactique secuntur inania saepe
cervorum simulacra, fugae quasi dedita cernant,
donec discussis redeant erroribus ad se.
at consueta domi catulorum blanda propago
discutere et corpus de terra corripere instant,
1000 iactant crura tamen subito vocisque repente
mittunt et crebro redducunt naribus auras
ut vestigia si teneant inventa ferarum
expergefactique secuntur inania saepe

proinde quasi ignotas facies atque ora tuantur.

1005 et quo quaeque magis sunt aspera semini-
iorum, tam magis in somnis eadem saevire necessust.

at variae fugiunt volucres pinnisque repente
sollicitant divom nocturno tempore lucos,
accipitres somno in leni si proelia pugnās

1010 edere sunt persectantes visaeque volantes.

porro hominum mentes, magnis quae motibus edunt
magna, itidem saepe in somnis faciuntque geruntque,
reges expugnant, capiuntur, proelia miscent,
tollunt clamorem, quasi si iugulentur ibidem.

1015 multi depugnant gemitusque doloribus edunt
et quasi pantherae morsu saevire leonis
mandantur, magnis clamoribus omnia complent.
multi de magnis per somnum rebus loquuntur
indicioque sui facti persaepe fuere.

1020 multi mortem obeunt. multi, de montibus altis
ut quasi praecipitent ad terram corpore toto,
exterruntur et ex somno quasi mentibus capti
vix ad se redeunt permoti corporis aestu.

flumen item sitiens aut fontem propter amoenum

1025 adsidet et totum prope faucibus occupat amnem.
puri saepe lacum propter si ac dolia curta
somno devincti credunt se extollere vestem,
totius umorem saccatum corporis fundunt,
cum Babylonica magnifico splendore rigantur.

1030 tum quibus aetatis freta primitus insinuatur
semen, ubi ipsa dies membris matura creavit,
conveniunt simulacra foris e corpore quoque,
nuntia praeclari voltus pulchrique coloris,
qui ciet inritans loca turgida semine multo,

1035 ut quasi transactis saepe omnibus rebus profundant
fluminis ingentis fluctus vestemque cruentent.

Sollicitatur id in nobis, quod diximus ante,
semen, adulta aetas cum primum roborat artus.
namque alias aliud res commovet atque lacessit;

1040 ex homine humanum semen ciet una hominis vis.

quod simul atque suis eiectum sedibus exit,
per membra atque artus decedit corpore toto,
in loca conveniens nervorum certa cietque
continuo partis genitalis corporis ipsas.

1045 inritata tument loca semine fitque voluntas
eicere id quo se contendit dira libido,
incitat inritans loca turgida semine multo

idque petit corpus, mens unde est saucia amore;
namque omnes plerumque cadunt in vulnus et illam
1050 emicat in partem sanguis, unde icimur ictu,
et si comminus est, hostem ruber occupat umor.
sic igitur Veneris qui telis accipit ictus,
sive puer membris muliebribus hunc iaculatur
seu mulier toto iactans e corpore amorem,
1055 unde feritur, eo tendit gestitque coire
t iacere umorem in corpus de corpore ductum;
namque voluptatem praesagit muta cupido.
Haec Venus est nobis; hinc autemst nomen Amoris,
hinc illaec primum Veneris dulcedinis in cor
1060 stillavit gutta et successit frigida cura;
nam si abest quod ames, praesto simulacra tamen sunt
illius et nomen dulce obversatur ad auris.
sed fugitare decet simulacra et pabula amoris
absterrere sibi atque alio convertere mentem
1065 et iacere umorem coniectum in corpora quaeque
nec retinere semel conversum unius amore
et servare sibi curam certumque dolorem;
ulcus enim vivescit et inveterascit alendo
inque dies gliscit furor atque aerumna gravescit,
1070 si non prima novis conturbes volnera plagis
volgivaque vagus Venere ante recentia cures
aut alio possis animi traducere motus.
Nec Veneris fructu caret is qui vitat amorem,
sed potius quae sunt sine poena commoda sumit;
1075 nam certe purast sanis magis inde voluptas
quam miseris; etenim potiundi tempore in ipso
fluctuat incertis erroribus ardor amantum
nec constat quid primum oculis manibusque fruantur.
quod petiere, premunt arte faciuntque dolorem
1080 corporis et dentes inlidunt saepe labellis
osculaue adfigunt, quia non est pura voluptas
et stimuli subsunt, qui instigant laedere id ipsum,
quod cumque est, rabies unde illaec germina surgunt.
sed leviter poenas frangit Venus inter amorem
1085 blandaue refrenat morsus admixta voluptas.
namque in eo spes est, unde est ardoris origo,
restingui quoque posse ab eodem corpore flammam.
quod fieri contra totum natura repugnat;
unaque res haec est, cuius quam plurima habemus,
1090 tam magis ardescit dira cuppedine pectus.
nam cibus atque umor membris adsumitur intus;

quae quoniam certas possunt obsidere partis,
hoc facile expletur laticum frugumque cupido.
ex hominis vero facie pulchroque colore

1095 nil datur in corpus praeter simulacra fruendum
tenvia; quae vento spes raptast saepe misella.

ut bibere in somnis sitiens quom quaerit et umor
non datur, ardorem qui membris stingere possit,
sed laticum simulacra petit frustra laborat

1100 in medioque sitit torrenti flumine potans,
sic in amore Venus simulacris ludit amantis,
nec satiare queunt spectando corpora coram
nec manibus quicquam teneris abradere membris
possunt errantes incerti corpore toto.

1105 denique cum membris conlatis flore fruuntur
aetatis, iam cum praesagit gaudia corpus
atque in eost Venus ut muliebria conserat arva,
adfigunt avide corpus iunguntque salivas
oris et inspirant pressantes dentibus ora,

1110 ne quiquam, quoniam nihil inde abradere possunt
nec penetrare et abire in corpus corpore toto;
nam facere inter dum velle et certare videntur.
usque adeo cupide in Veneris compagibus haerent,
membra voluptatis dum vi labefacta liquescunt.

1115 tandem ubi se erupit nervis coniecta cupido,
parva fit ardoris violenti pausa parumper.
inde redit rabies eadem et furor ille revisit,
cum sibi quod cupiant ipsi contingere quaerunt,
nec reperire malum id possunt quae machina vincat.

1120 usque adeo incerti tabescunt volnere caeco.
Adde quod absumunt viris pereuntque labore,
adde quod alterius sub nutu degitur aetas,
languent officia atque aegrotat fama vacillans.
labitur interea res et Babylonia fiunt

1125 unguenta et pulchra in pedibus Sicyonia rident,
scilicet et grandes viridi cum luce zmaragdi
auro includuntur teriturque thalassina vestis
adsidue et Veneris sudorem exercita potat.
et bene parta patrum fiunt anademata, mitrae,

1130 inter dum in pallam atque Alidensia Ciaque vertunt.
eximia veste et victu convivium, ludi,
pocula crebra, unguenta, coronae, sarta parantur,
ne quiquam, quoniam medio de fonte leporum
surgit amari aliquid, quod in ipsis floribus angat,
1135 aut cum conscius ipse animus se forte remordet

desidiose agere aetatem lustrisque perire,
aut quod in ambiguo verbum iaculata reliquit,
quod cupido adfixum cordi vivescit ut ignis,
aut nimium iactare oculos aliumve tueri
1140 quod putat in voltuque videt vestigia risus.
Atque in amore mala haec proprio summeque secundo
inveniuntur; in adverso vero atque inopi sunt,
prendere quae possis oculorum lumine operto.
innumerabilia; ut melius vigilare sit ante,
1145 qua docui ratione, cavereque, ne iliciaris.
nam vitare, plagas in amoris ne iaciamur,
non ita difficile est quam captum retibus ipsis
exire et validos Veneris perrumpere nodos.
et tamen implicitus quoque possis inque peditus
1150 effugere infestum, nisi tute tibi obvius obstes
et praetermittas animi vitia omnia primum
aut quae corporis sunt eius, quam praepetis ac vis.
nam faciunt homines plerumque cupidine caeci
et tribuunt ea quae non sunt his commoda vere.
1155 multimodis igitur pravas turpisque videmus
esse in deliciis summoque in honore vigere.
atque alios alii inrident Veneremque suadent
ut placent, quoniam foedo adflitentur amore,
nec sua respiciunt miseri mala maxima saepe.
1160 nigra melichrus est, inmundi et fetida acosmos,
caesia Palladium, nervosa et lignea dorcias,
parvula, pumilio, chariton mia, tota merum sal,
magna atque inmanis cataplexis plenaque honoris.
balba loqui non quit, traulizi, muta pudens est;
1165 at flagrans, odiosa, loquacula Lampadium fit.
ischnon eromenion tum fit, cum vivere non quit
prae macie; rhadine verost iam mortua tussi.
at nimia et mammosa Ceres est ipsa ab Iaccho,
simula Silena ac Saturast, labeosa philema.
1170 cetera de genere hoc longum est si dicere coner.
sed tamen esto iam quantovis oris honore,
cui Veneris membris vis omnibus exoriatur;
nempe aliae quoque sunt; nempe hac sine viximus ante;
nempe eadem facit et scimus facere omnia turpi
1175 et miseram taetris se suffit odoribus ipsa,
quam famulae longe fugitant furtimque cachinnant.
at lacrimans exclusus amator limina saepe
floribus et sertis operit postisque superbos
unguit amaracino et foribus miser oscula figit;

1180 quem si iam ammissum venientem offenderit aura
una modo, causas abeundi quaerat honestas
et meditata diu cadat alte sumpta querella
stultitiaque ibi se damnet, tribuisse quod illi
plus videat quam mortali concedere par est.

1185 nec Veneres nostras hoc fallit; quo magis ipsae
omnia summo opere hos vitae poscaenia celant,
quos retinere volunt adstrictosque esse in amore,
ne quiquam, quoniam tu animo tamen omnia possis
protrahere in lucem atque omnis inquirere risus

1190 et, si bello animos et non odiosa, vicissim
praetermittere et humanis concedere rebus.

Nec mulier semper ficto suspirat amore,
quae complexa viri corpus cum corpore iungit
et tenet adsuctis umectans oscula labris;

1195 nam facit ex animo saepe et communia quaerens
gaudia sollicitat spatium decurrere amoris.

nec ratione alia volucres armenta feraeque
et pecudes et equae maribus subsidere possent,
si non, ipsa quod illarum subat, ardet abundans

1200 natura et Venerem salientum laeta retractat.

nonne vides etiam quos mutua saepe voluptas
vinxit, ut in vinclis communibus excrucientur,
in triviis cum saepe canes discedere aventis
divorsi cupide summis ex viribus tendunt,

1205 quom interea validis Veneris compagibus haerent?

quod facerent numquam, nisi mutua gaudia nossent,
quae iacere in fraudem possent vinctosque tenere.

quare etiam atque etiam, ut dico, est communis voluptas.

Et commiscendo quom semine forte virilem

1210 femina vim vicit subita vi corripuitque,
tum similes matrum materno semine fiunt,
ut patribus patrio. sed quos utriusque figurae

esse vides, iuxtim miscentes vultu parentum,
corpore de patrio et materno sanguine crescunt,

1215 semina cum Veneris stimulis excita per artus
obvia confligit conspirans mutuus ardor,
et neque utrum superavit eorum nec superatumst.

fit quoque ut inter dum similes existere avorum
possint et referant proavorum saepe figuras,

1220 propterea quia multa modis primordia multis
mixta suo celant in corpore saepe parentis,
quae patribus patres tradunt a stirpe profecta.
inde Venus varia producit sorte figuras,

maiorumque refert voltus vocesque comasque;
1225 quandoquidem nihilo magis haec de semine certo
fiunt quam facies et corpora membraque nobis.
et muliebre oritur patrio de semine saeculum
maternoque mares existunt corpore creti;
semper enim partus duplici de semine constat,
1230 atque utri similest magis id quod cumque creatur,
eius habet plus parte aequa; quod cernere possis,
sive virum suboles sive muliebris origo.
Nec divina satum genitalem numina cuiquam
absterrent, pater a gnatis ne dulcibus umquam
1235 appelletur et ut sterili Venere exigat aevom;
quod plerumque putant et multo sanguine maesti
conspargunt aras adolentque altaria donis,
ut gravidas reddant uxores semine largo;
ne quiquam divom numen sortisque fatigant;
1240 nam steriles nimium crasso sunt semine partim,
et liquido praeter iustum tenuique vicissim.
tenve locis quia non potis est adfigere adhaesum,
liquitur extemplo et revocatum cedit abortu.
crassius hinc porro quoniam concretius aequo
1245 mittitur, aut non tam proluxo provolat ictu
aut penetrare locos aequae nequit aut penetratum
aegre admiscetur muliebri semine semen.
nam multum harmoniae Veneris differre videntur.
atque alias alii complent magis ex aliisque
1250 succipiunt aliae pondus magis inque gravescunt.
et multae steriles Hymenaeis ante fuerunt
pluribus et nactae post sunt tamen unde puellum
suscipere et partu possent ditescere dulci.
et quibus ante domi fecundae saepe nequissent
1255 uxoris parere, inventast illis quoque compar
natura, ut possent gnatis munire senectam.
usque adeo magni refert, ut semina possint
seminibus commisceri genitaliter apta
crassaque convenient liquidis et liquida crassis.
1260 atque in eo refert quo victu vita colatur;
namque aliis rebus concrescunt semina membris
atque aliis extendantur tabentque vicissim.
et quibus ipsa modis tractetur blanda voluptas.
id quoque permagni refert; nam more ferarum
1265 quadrupedumque magis ritu plerumque putantur
concipere uxores, quia sic loca sumere possunt
pectoribus positae sublati semina lumbis.

nec molles opus sunt motus uxoribus hilum.
nam mulier prohibet se concipere atque repugnat,
1270 clunibus ipsa viri Venerem si laeta retractat
atque exossato ciet omni pectore fluctus;
eicit enim sulcum recta regione viaque
vomeris atque locis avertit seminis ictum.
idque sua causa consuerunt scorta moveri,
1275 ne complerentur crebro gravidaeque iacerent,
et simul ipsa viris Venus ut concinnior esset;
coniugibus quod nil nostris opus esse videtur.
Nec divinitus inter dum Venerisque sagittis
deteriore fit ut forma muliercula ametur;
1280 nam facit ipsa suis inter dum femina factis
morigerisque modis et munde corpore culto,
ut facile insuescat secum te degere vitam.
quod super est, consuetudo concinnat amorem;
nam leviter quamvis quod crebro tunditur ictu,
1285 vincitur in longo spatio tamen atque labascit.
nonne vides etiam guttas in saxa cadentis
umoris longo in spatio pertundere saxa?

Liber Quintus

Quis potis est dignum pollenti pectore carmen
condere pro rerum maiestate hisque repertis?
quisve valet verbis tantum, qui fingere laudes
pro meritis eius possit, qui talia nobis
5 pectore parta suo quaesitaque praemia liquit?
nemo, ut opinor, erit mortali corpore cretus.
nam si, ut ipsa petit maiestas cognita rerum,
dicendum est, deus ille fuit, deus, inclyte Memmi,
qui princeps vitae rationem invenit eam quae
10 nunc appellatur sapientia, quique per artem
fluctibus et tantis vitam tantisque tenebris
in tam tranquillo et tam clara luce locavit.
confer enim divina aliorum antiqua reperta.
namque Ceres fertur fruges Liberque liquoris
15 vitigeni laticem mortalibus instituisse;
cum tamen his posset sine rebus vita manere,
ut fama est aliquas etiam nunc vivere gentis.
at bene non poterat sine puro pectore vivi;
quo magis hic merito nobis deus esse videtur,
20 ex quo nunc etiam per magnas didita gentis
dulcia permulcent animos solacia vitae.
Herculis antistare autem si facta putabis,
longius a vera multo ratione ferere.
quid Nemeaeus enim nobis nunc magnus hiatus
25 ille leonis obsesset et horrens Arcadius sus,
tanto opere officerent nobis Stymphala colentes?
denique quid Cretae taurus Lernaeeque pestis
hydra venenatis posset vallata colubris?
quidve tripectora tergemini vis Geryonai
30 et Diomedis equi spirantes naribus ignem
Thracia Bistoniasque plagas atque Ismara propter
aureaque Hesperidum servans fulgentia mala,
asper, acerba tuens, immani corpore serpens
arboris amplexus stirpes? quid denique obsesset
35 propter Atlanteum litus pelagique severa,
quo neque noster adit quisquam nec barbarus audet?
cetera de genere hoc quae sunt portenta perempta,
si non victa forent, quid tandem viva nocerent?
nil, ut opinor: ita ad satiatem terra ferarum
40 nunc etiam scatit et trepido terrore repleta est
per nemora ac montes magnos silvasque profundas;

quae loca vitandi plerumque est nostra potestas.
at nisi purgatumst pectus, quae proelia nobis
atque pericula tumst ingratis insinuandum!

45 quanta tum scindunt hominem cuppedinis acres
sollicitum curae quantique perinde timores!
quidve superbia spurcitia ac petulantia? quantas
efficiunt clades! quid luxus desidiaequae?
haec igitur qui cuncta subegerit ex animoque
50 expulerit dictis, non armis, nonne decebit
hunc hominem numero divom dignarier esse?
cum bene praesertim multa ac divinitus ipsis
iam mortalibus e divis dare dicta suerit
atque omnem rerum naturam pandere dictis.

55 Cuius ego ingressus vestigia dum rationes
persequor ac doceo dictis, quo quaeque creata
foedere sint, in eo quam sit durare necessum
nec validas valeant aevi rescindere leges,
quo genere in primis animi natura reperta est
60 nativo primum consistere corpore creta,
nec posse incolumem magnum durare per aevum,
sed simulacra solere in somnis fallere mentem,
cernere cum videamur eum quem vita reliquit,
quod super est, nunc huc rationis detulit ordo,

65 ut mihi mortali consistere corpore mundum
nativomque simul ratio reddunda sit esse;
et quibus ille modis congressus materiai
fundarit terram caelum mare sidera solem
lunaique globum; tum quae tellure animantes
70 extiterint, et quae nullo sint tempore natae;
quove modo genus humanum variante loquella
coeperit inter se vesci per nomina rerum;
et quibus ille modis divom metus insinuarit
pectora, terrarum qui in orbi sancta tuetur

75 fana lacus lucos aras simulacraque divom.
praeterea solis cursus lunaeque meatus
expediam qua vi flectat natura gubernans;
ne forte haec inter caelum terramque reamur
libera sponte sua cursus lustrare perennis,

80 morigera ad fruges augendas atque animantis,
neve aliqua divom volvi ratione putemus.
nam bene qui didicere deos securum agere aevom,
si tamen interea mirantur qua ratione
quaeque geri possint, praesertim rebus in illis
85 quae supera caput aetheriis cernuntur in oris,

rursus in antiquas referuntur religiones
et dominos acris adsciscunt, omnia posse
quos miseri credunt, ignari quid queat esse,
quid nequeat, finita potestas denique cuique
90 qua nam sit ratione atque alte terminus haerens.
Quod super est, ne te in promissis plura moremur,
principio maria ac terras caelumque tuere;
quorum naturam triplicem, tria corpora, Memmi,
tris species tam dissimilis, tria talia texta,
95 una dies dabit exitio, multosque per annos
sustentata ruet moles et machina mundi.
nec me animi fallit quam res nova miraque menti
accidat exitium caeli terraeque futurum,
et quam difficile id mihi sit pervincere dictis;
100 ut fit ubi insolitam rem adportes auribus ante
nec tamen hanc possis oculorum subdere visu
nec iacere indu manus, via qua munita fidei
proxima fert humanum in pectus templaque mentis.
sed tamen effabor. dictis dabit ipsa fidem res
105 forsitan et graviter terrarum motibus ortis
omnia conquassari in parvo tempore cernes.
quod procul a nobis flectat fortuna gubernans,
et ratio potius quam res persuadeat ipsa
succidere horrisono posse omnia victa fragore.
110 Qua prius adgrediar quam de re fundere fata
sanctius et multo certa ratione magis quam
Pythia quae tripode a Phoebi lauroque profatur,
multa tibi expediam doctis solacia dictis;
religione refrenatus ne forte rearis
115 terras et solem et caelum, mare sidera lunam,
corpore divino debere aeterna manere,
proptereaque putes ritu par esse Gigantum
pendere eos poenas inmani pro scelere omnis,
qui ratione sua disturbent moenia mundi
120 praeclarumque velint caeli restinguere solem
inmortalia mortali sermone notantes;
quae procul usque adeo divino a numine distent
inque deum numero quae sint indigna videri,
notitiam potius praebere ut posse putentur
125 quid sit vitali motu sensuque remotum.
quippe etenim non est, cum quovis corpore ut esse
posse animi natura putetur consiliumque.
sicut in aethere non arbor, non aequore salso
nubes esse queunt neque pisces vivere in arvis

130 nec cruor in lignis neque saxis sucus inesse,
certum ac dispositumst ubi quicquid crescat et insit,
sic animi natura nequit sine corpore oriri
sola neque a nervis et sanguine longius esse.
quod si posset enim, multo prius ipsa animi vis
135 in capite aut umeris aut imis calcibus esse
posset et innasci quavis in parte soleret,
tandem in eodem homine atque in eodem vase manere.
quod quoniam nostro quoque constat corpore certum
dispositumque videtur ubi esse et crescere possit
140 seorsum anima atque animus, tanto magis infitiandum
totum posse extra corpus formamque animalem
putribus in glebis terrarum aut solis in igni
aut in aqua durare aut altis aetheris oris.
haud igitur constant divino praedita sensu,
145 quandoquidem nequeunt vitaliter esse animata.
Illud item non est ut possis credere, sedes
esse deum sanctas in mundi partibus ullis.
tenvis enim natura deum longeque remota
sensibus ab nostris animi vix mente videtur;
150 quae quoniam manuum tactum suffugit et ictum,
tactile nil nobis quod sit contingere debet;
tangere enim non quit quod tangi non licet ipsum.
quare etiam sedes quoque nostris sedibus esse
dissimiles debent, tenues de corpore eorum;
155 quae tibi posterius largo sermone probabo.
Dicere porro hominum causa voluisse parare
praeclaram mundi naturam proptereaque
adlaudabile opus divom laudare decere
aeternumque putare atque inmortale futurum,
160 nec fas esse, deum quod sit ratione vetusta
gentibus humanis fundatum perpetuo aevo,
sollicitare suis ulla vi ex sedibus umquam
nec verbis vexare et ab imo evertere summa,
cetera de genere hoc adfingere et addere, Memmi,
165 desiperest. quid enim immortalibus atque beatis
gratia nostra queat largirier emolumenti,
ut nostra quicquam causa gerere adgrediantur?
quidve novi potuit tanto post ante quietos
inlicere ut cuperent vitam mutare priorem?
170 nam gaudere novis rebus debere videtur
cui veteres obsunt; sed cui nihil accidit aegri
tempore in ante acto, cum pulchre degeret aevom,
quid potuit novitatis amorem accendere tali?

quidve mali fuerat nobis non esse creatis?

175 an, credo, in tenebris vita ac maerore iacebat,
donec diluxit rerum genitalis origo?

natus enim debet qui cumque est velle manere
in vita, donec retinebit blanda voluptas;
qui numquam vero vitae gustavit amorem

180 nec fuit in numero, quid obest non esse creatum?

exemplum porro gignundis rebus et ipsa
notities hominum divis unde insita primum est,
quid vellent facere ut scirent animoque viderent,
quoque modost umquam vis cognita principiorum

185 quidque inter sese permutato ordine possent.
si non ipsa dedit speciem natura creandi?

namque ita multa modis multis primordia rerum
ex infinito iam tempore percita plagis

ponderibusque suis consuerunt concita ferri

190 omnimodisque coire atque omnia pertemptare,
quae cumque inter se possint congressa creare,
ut non sit mirum, si in talis disposituras
deciderunt quoque et in talis venere meatus,
qualibus haec rerum geritur nunc summa novando.

195 Quod si iam rerum ignorem primordia quae sint,
hoc tamen ex ipsis caeli rationibus ausim
confirmare aliisque ex rebus reddere multis,
nequaquam nobis divinitus esse paratam
naturam rerum: tanta stat praedita culpa.

200 principio quantum caeli tegit impetus ingens,
inde avidam partem montes silvaeque ferarum
possedere, tenent rupes vastaeque paludes
et mare, quod late terrarum distinet oras.

inde duas porro prope partis fervidus ardor
205 adsiduusque geli casus mortalibus aufert.
quod super est arvi, tamen id natura sua vi
sentibus obducat, ni vis humana resistat
vitai causa valido consueta bidenti

ingemere et terram pressis proscindere aratris.

210 si non fecundas vertentes vomere glebas
terraique solum subigentes cimus ad ortus.
sponte sua nequeant liquidas existere in auras.

et tamen inter dum magno quaesita labore
cum iam per terras frondent atque omnia florent,

215 aut nimiis torret fervoribus aetherius sol
aut subiti peremunt imbris gelidaeque pruinae
flabraque ventorum violento turbine vexant.

praeterea genus horriferum natura ferarum
humanae genti infestum terraque marique
220 cur alit atque auget? cur anni tempora morbos
adportant? quare mors inmatura vagatur?
tum porro puer, ut saevis proiectus ab undis
navita, nudus humi iacet infans indigus omni
vitali auxilio, cum primum in luminis oras
225 nixibus ex alvo matris natura profudit,
vagituque locum lugubri complet, ut aequumst
cui tantum in vita restet transire malorum.
at variae crescunt pecudes armenta feraeque
nec crepitacillis opus est nec cuiquam adhibendast
230 almae nutricis blanda atque infracta loquella
nec varias quaerunt vestes pro tempore caeli,
denique non armis opus est, non moenibus altis,
qui sua tutentur, quando omnibus omnia large
tellus ipsa parit naturaque daedala rerum.
235 Principio quoniam terrai corpus et umor
aurarumque leves animae calidique vapores,
e quibus haec rerum consistere summa videtur,
omnia nativo ac mortali corpore constant,
debet eodem omnis mundi natura putari.
240 quippe etenim, quorum partis et membra videmus
corpore nativo mortalibus esse figuris,
haec eadem ferme mortalia cernimus esse
et nativa simul. qua propter maxima mundi
cum videam membra ac partis consumpta regigni,
245 scire licet caeli quoque item terraeque fuisse
principiale aliquod tempus clademque futuram.
Illud in his rebus ne corripuisse rearis
me mihi, quod terram atque ignem mortalia sumpsit
esse neque umorem dubitavi aurasque perire
250 atque eadem gigni rursusque augescere dixi.
principio pars terrai non nulla, perusta
solibus adsiduis, multa pulsata pedum vi,
pulveris exhalat nebulam nubesque volantis,
quas validi toto dispergunt aëre venti.
255 pars etiam glebarum ad diluvium revocatur
imbribus et ripas radentia flumina rodunt.
praeterea pro parte sua, quod cumque alit auget,
redditur; et quoniam dubio procul esse videtur
omniparens eadem rerum commune sepulcrum.
260 ergo terra tibi libatur et aucta recrescit.
Quod super est, umore novo mare flumina fontes

semper abundare et latices manare perennis
nil opus est verbis: magnus decursus aquarum
undique declarat. sed primum quicquid aquai
265 tollitur in summaque fit ut nihil umor abundet,
partim quod validi verrentes aequora venti
deminuunt radiisque retexens aetherius sol,
partim quod sup̄ter per terras diditur omnis;
percolatur enim virus retroque remanat
270 materies umoris et ad caput am̄nibus omnis
convenit, inde super terras fluit agmine dulci
qua via secta semel liquido pede detulit undas.
Aëra nunc igitur dicam, qui corpore toto
innumerabiliter privas mutatur in horas.
275 semper enim, quod cumque fluit de rebus, id omne
aëris in magnum fertur mare; qui nisi contra
corpora retribuat rebus recreetque fluentis,
omnia iam resoluta forent et in aëra versa.
haut igitur cessat gigni de rebus et in res
280 reccidere, adsidue quoniam fluere omnia constat.
Largus item liquidi fons luminis, aetherius sol,
inrigat adsidue caelum candore recenti
suppeditatque novo confestim lumine lumen.
nam primum quicquid fulgoris disperit ei,
285 quo cumque accidit. id licet hinc cognoscere possis,
quod simul ac primum nubes succedere soli
coepere et radios inter quasi rumpere lucis,
extemplo inferior pars horum disperit omnis
terraque inumbratur qua nimbi cumque feruntur;
290 ut noscas splendore novo res semper egere
et primum iactum fulgoris quemque perire
nec ratione alia res posse in sole videri,
perpetuo ni suppeditet lucis caput ipsum.
quin etiam nocturna tibi, terrestria quae sunt,
295 lumina, pendentes lychni claraeque coruscis
fulguribus pingues multa caligine taedae
consimili properant ratione, ardore ministro,
suppeditare novom lumen, tremere ignibus instant,
instant, nec loca lux inter quasi rupta relinquit:
300 usque adeo properanter ab omnibus ignibus ei
exitium celeri celeratur origine flammae.
sic igitur solem lunam stellasque putandum
ex alio atque alio lucem iactare subortu
et primum quicquid flammarum perdere semper,
305 inviolabilia haec ne credas forte vigere.

Denique non lapides quoque vinci cernis ab aevo,
non altas turris ruere et putrescere saxa,
non delubra deum simulacraque fessa fatisci
nec sanctum numen fati protollere finis
310 posse neque adversus naturae foedera niti?
denique non monimenta virum dilapsa videmus,
quaerere proporro, sibi cumque senescere credas,
non ruere avolsos silices a montibus altis
nec validas aevi vires perferre patique
315 finiti? neque enim caderent avolsa repente,
ex infinito quae tempore pertolerassent
omnia tormenta aetatis, privata fragore.
Denique iam tuere hoc, circum supraque quod omne
continet amplexu terram: si procreat ex se
320 omnia, quod quidam memorant, recipitque perempta,
totum nativum mortali corpore constat.
nam quod cumque alias ex se res auget alitque,
deminui debet, recreari, cum recipit res.
Praeterea si nulla fuit genitalis origo
325 terrarum et caeli semperque aeterna fuere,
cur supera bellum Thebanum et funera Troiae
non alias alii quoque res cecinere poëtae?
quo tot facta virum totiens cecidere neque usquam
aeternis famae monimentis insita florent?
330 verum, ut opinor, habet novitatem summa recensque
naturast mundi neque pridem exordia cepit.
quare etiam quaedam nunc artes expoliuntur,
nunc etiam augescunt; nunc addita navigiis sunt
multa, modo organici melicos peperere sonores,
335 denique natura haec rerum ratioque repertast
nuper, et hanc primus cum primis ipse repertus
nunc ego sum in patrias qui possim vertere voces.
Quod si forte fuisse ante hac eadem omnia credis,
sed periisse hominum torrenti saecula vapore,
340 aut cecidisse urbis magno vexamine mundi,
aut ex imbribus adsiduis exisse rapaces
per terras amnes atque oppida coperuisse.
tanto quique magis victus fateare necessest
exitium quoque terrarum caelique futurum;
345 nam cum res tantis morbis tantisque periclis
temptarentur, ibi si tristior incubuisset
causa, darent late cladem magnasque ruinas.
nec ratione alia mortales esse videmur,
inter nos nisi quod morbis aegrescimus isdem

350 atque illi quos a vita natura removit.

Praeterea quae cumque manent aeterna necessust
aut, quia sunt solido cum corpore, respuere ictus
nec penetrare pati sibi quicquam quod queat artas
dissociare intus partis, ut materiai

355 corpora sunt, quorum naturam ostendimus ante,
aut ideo durare aetatem posse per omnem,
plagarum quia sunt expertia, sicut inane est,
quod manet intactum neque ab ictu fungitur hilum,
aut etiam quia nulla loci sit copia circum,
360 quo quasi res possint discedere dissoluique,
sicut summarum summa est aeterna, neque extra
qui locus est quo dissiliant neque corpora sunt quae
possint incidere et valida dissolvere plaga.

at neque, uti docui, solido cum corpore mundi

365 naturast, quoniam admixtumst in rebus inane,
nec tamen est ut inane, neque autem corpora desunt,
ex infinito quae possint forte coorta

corruere hanc rerum violento turbine summam
aut aliam quamvis cladem inportare pericli,

370 nec porro natura loci spatiumque profundi
deficit, exspargi quo possint moenia mundi,
aut alia quavis possunt vi pulsa perire.

haut igitur leti praeclusa est ianua caelo

nec soli terraeque neque altis aequoris undis,

375 sed patet immani et vasto respectat hiatu.

quare etiam nativa necessumst confiteare

haec eadem; neque enim, mortali corpore quae sunt,
ex infinito iam tempore adhuc potuissent
inmensi validas aevi contemnere vires.

380 Denique tantopere inter se cum maxima mundi
pugnent membra, pio nequaquam concita bello,
nonne vides aliquam longi certaminis ollis
posse dari finem, vel cum sol et vapor omnis
omnibus epotis umoribus exsuperarint?

385 quod facere intendunt, neque adhuc conata patrantur;
tantum suppeditant amnes ultraque minantur
omnia diluviare ex alto gurgite ponti:

ne quiquam, quoniam verrentes aequora venti
deminuunt radiisque retexens aetherius sol,

390 et siccare prius confidunt omnia posse
quam liquor incepti possit contingere finem.
tantum spirantes aequo certamine bellum
magnis inter se de rebus cernere certant,

cum semel interea fuerit superantior ignis
395 et semel, ut fama est, umor regnarit in arvis.
ignis enim superavit et ambiens multa perussit,
avia cum Phaethonta rapax vis solis equorum
aethere raptavit toto terrasque per omnis.
at pater omnipotens ira tum percitus acri
400 magnanimum Phaethonta repenti fulminis ictu
deturbavit equis in terram, Solque cadenti
obvius aeternam suscepit lampada mundi
disiectosque redegit equos iunxitque trementis,
inde suum per iter recreavit cuncta gubernans,
405 scilicet ut veteres Graium cecinere poëtae.
quod procul a vera nimis est ratione repulsum.
ignis enim superare potest ubi material
ex infinito sunt corpora plura coorta;
inde cadunt vires aliqua ratione revictae,
410 aut pereunt res exustae torrentibus auris.
umor item quondam coepit superare coortus,
ut fama est, hominum vitas quando obruit undis;
inde ubi vis aliqua ratione aversa recessit,
ex infinito fuerat quae cumque coorta,
415 constiterunt imbres et flumina vim minuerunt.
Sed quibus ille modis coniectus material
fundarit terram et caelum pontique profunda,
solis lunai cursus, ex ordine ponam.
nam certe neque consilio primordia rerum
420 ordine se suo quaeque sagaci mente locarunt
nec quos quaeque darent motus pepigere profecto;
sed quia multa modis multis primordia rerum
ex infinito iam tempore percita plagis
ponderibusque suis consuerunt concita ferri
425 omnimodisque coire atque omnia pertemptare,
quae cumque inter se possent congressa creare,
propterea fit uti magnum volgata per aevom
omnigenus coetus et motus experiundo
tandem conveniant ea quae coniecta repente
430 magnarum rerum fiunt exordia saepe,
terrai maris et caeli generisque animantium.
Hic neque tum solis rota cerni lumine largo
altivolans poterat nec magni sidera mundi
nec mare nec caelum nec denique terra neque aër
435 nec similis nostris rebus res ulla videri,
sed nova tempestas quaedam molesque coorta.
diffugere inde loci partes coepere paresque

cum paribus iungi res et discludere mundum
membraque dividere et magnas disponere partes
440 omnigenis e principiiis, discordia quorum
intervalla vias conexus pondera plagas
concursus motus turbabat proelia miscens
propter dissimilis formas variasque figuras,
quod non omnia sic poterant coniuncta manere
445 nec motus inter sese dare convenientis,
hoc est, a terris altum secernere caelum,
et sorsum mare, uti secreto umore pateret,
seorsus item puri secretique aetheris ignes.
Quippe etenim primum terrai corpora quaeque,
450 propterea quod erant gravia et perplexa, coibant
in medio atque imas capiebant omnia sedes;
quae quanto magis inter se perplexa coibant,
tam magis expressere ea quae mare sidera solem
lunamque efficerent et magni moenia mundi;
455 omnia enim magis haec e levibus atque rutundis
seminibus multoque minoribus sunt elementis
quam tellus. ideo per rara foramina terrae
partibus erumpens primus se sustulit aether
ignifer et multos secum levis abstulit ignis,
460 non alia longe ratione ac saepe videmus,
aurea cum primum gemmantis rore per herbas
matutina rubent radiati lumina solis
exhalantque lacus nebulam fluviique perennes
ipsaque ut inter dum tellus fumare videtur;
465 omnia quae sursum cum conciliantur, in alto
corpore concreto subtexunt nubila caelum.
sic igitur tum se levis ac diffusilis aether
corpore concreto circum datus undique saepsit
et late diffusus in omnis undique partis
470 omnia sic avido complexu cetera saepsit.
hunc exordia sunt solis lunaeque secuta,
interutrasque globi quorum vertuntur in auris;
quae neque terra sibi adscivit nec maximus aether,
quod neque tam fuerunt gravia ut depressa sederent,
475 nec levia ut possent per summas labier oras,
et tamen interutrasque ita sunt, ut corpora viva
versent et partes ut mundi totius extent;
quod genus in nobis quaedam licet in statione
membra manere, tamen cum sint ea quae moveantur.
480 his igitur rebus retractis terra repente,
maxuma qua nunc se ponti plaga caerula tendit,

succidit et salso suffudit gurgite fossas.
inque dies quanto circum magis aetheris aestus
et radii solis cogeant undique terram
485 verberibus crebris extrema ad limina fartam
in medio ut propulsa suo condensa coiret,
tam magis expressus salsus de corpore sudor
augebat mare manando camposque natantis,
et tanto magis illa foras elapsa volabant
490 corpora multa vaporis et aëris altaque caeli
densabant procul a terris fulgentia templa.
sidebant campi, crescebant montibus altis
ascensus; neque enim poterant subsidere saxa
nec pariter tantundem omnes succumbere partis.
495 Sic igitur terrae concreto corpore pondus
constitit atque omnis mundi quasi limus in imum
confluxit gravis et subsedit funditus ut faex;
inde mare, inde aër, inde aether ignifer ipse
corporibus liquidis sunt omnia pura relict
500 et leviora aliis alia, et liquidissimus aether
atque levissimus aërias super influit auras
nec liquidum corpus turbantibus aëris auris
commiscet; sinit haec violentis omnia verti
turbabinibus, sinit incertis turbare procellis,
505 ipse suos ignis certo fert impete labens.
nam modice fluere atque uno posse aethera nisu
significat Pontos, mare certo quod fluit aestu
unum labendi conservans usque tenorem.
Motibus astrorum nunc quae sit causa canamus.
510 principio magnus caeli si vortitur orbis,
ex utraque polum parti premere aëra nobis
dicendum est extraque tenere et claudere utrimque;
inde alium supra fluere atque intendere eodem
quo volvenda micant aeterni sidera mundi;
515 aut alium supter, contra qui subvehat orbem,
ut fluvios versare rotas atque austra videmus.
est etiam quoque uti possit caelum omne manere
in statione, tamen cum lucida signa ferantur,
sive quod inclusi rapidi sunt aetheris aestus
520 quaerentesque viam circum versantur et ignes
passim per caeli volvunt summania templa,
sive aliunde fluens alicunde extrinsecus aër
versat agens ignis, sive ipsi serpere possunt,
quo cuiusque cibus vocat atque invitat euntis,
525 flammea per caelum pascentis corpora passim.

nam quid in hoc mundo sit eorum ponere certum
difficilest; sed quid possit fiatque per omne
in variis mundis varia ratione creatis,
id doceo plurisque sequor disponere causas,
530 motibus astrorum quae possint esse per omne;
e quibus una tamen sit et haec quoque causa necessest,
quae vegeat motum signis; sed quae sit earum
praecipere haud quaquamst pedetemptim progredientis.
Terraque ut in media mundi regione quiescat,
535 evanescere paulatim et decrescere pondus
convenit atque aliam naturam sup̄ter habere
ex ineunte aevo coniunctam atque uniter aptam
partibus aëriis mundi, quibus insita vivit.
propterea non est oneri neque deprimit auras,
540 ut sua cuique homini nullo sunt pondere membra
nec caput est oneri collo nec denique totum
corporis in pedibus pondus sentimus inesse;
at quae cumque foris veniunt inpostaque nobis
pondera sunt laedunt, permulto saepe minora.
545 usque adeo magni refert quid quaeque queat res.
sic igitur tellus non est aliena repente
allata atque auris aliunde obiecta alienis,
sed pariter prima concepta ab origine mundi
certaque pars eius, quasi nobis membra videntur.
550 Praeterea grandi tonitru concussa repente
terra supra quae se sunt concutit omnia motu;
quod facere haut ulla posset ratione, nisi esset
partibus aëriis mundi caeloque revincta;
nam communibus inter se radicibus haerent
555 ex ineunte aevo coniuncta atque uniter aucta.
Nonne vides etiam quam magno pondere nobis
sustineat corpus tenuissima vis animai,
propterea quia tam coniuncta atque uniter apta est?
Denique iam saltu pernici tollere corpus
560 quid potis est nisi vis animae, quae membra gubernat?
iamne vides quantum tenuis natura valere
possit, ubi est coniuncta gravi cum corpore, ut aër
coniunctus terris et nobis est animi vis?
Nec nimio solis maior rota nec minor ardor
565 esse potest, nostris quam sensibus esse videtur.
nam quibus e spatiis cumque ignes lumina possunt
adiicere et calidum membr̄is adflare vaporem,
nil magnis intervallis de corpore libant
flammarum, nihil ad speciem est contractior ignis.

570 proinde, calor quoniam solis lumenque profusum
perveniant nostros ad sensus et loca fulgent,
forma quoque hinc solis debet filumque videri,
nil adeo ut possis plus aut minus addere vere.
perveniant nostros ad sensus et loca fulgent
575 lunaque sive notho fertur loca lumine lustrans,
sive suam proprio iactat de corpore lucem,
quidquid id est, nihilo fertur maiore figura
quam, nostris oculis qua cernimus, esse videtur.
nam prius omnia, quae longe semota tuemur
580 aëra per multum, specie confusa videntur
quam minui filum. quapropter luna necesse est,
quandoquidem claram speciem certamque figuram
praebet, ut est oris extremis cumque notata,
quanta quoquest, tanta hinc nobis videatur in alto.
585 postremo quos cumque vides hinc aetheris ignes,
scire licet perquam pauxillo posse minores
esse vel exigua maioris parte brevique.
quandoquidem quos cumque in terris cernimus ignes,
dum tremor et clarus dum cernitur ardor eorum,
590 perparvom quiddam inter dum mutare videntur
alteram utram in partem filum, quo longius absunt.
Illud item non est mirandum, qua ratione
tantulus ille queat tantum sol mittere lumen,
quod maria ac terras omnis caelumque rigando
595 compleat et calido perfundat cuncta vapore.
quanta quoquest tanta hinc nobis videatur in alto
nam licet hinc mundi patefactum totius unum
largifluum fontem scatere atque erumpere lumen,
ex omni mundo quia sic elementa vaporis
600 undique conveniunt et sic coniectus eorum
confluit, ex uno capite hic ut profluat ardor.
nonne vides etiam quam late parvus aquai
prata riget fons inter dum campisque redundet?
est etiam quoque uti non magno solis ab igni
605 aëra percipiat calidis fervoribus ardor,
opportunos ita est si forte et idoneus aër,
ut queat accendi parvis ardoribus ictus;
quod genus inter dum segetes stipulamque videmus
accidere ex una scintilla incendia passim.
610 forsitan et rosea sol alte lampade lucens
possideat multum caecis fervoribus ignem
circum se, nullo qui sit fulgore notatus,
aestifer ut tantum radiorum exaugeat ictum.

Nec ratio solis simplex et recta patescit,
615 quo pacto aestivis e partibus aegocerotis
brumalis adeat flexus atque inde revertens
canceris ut vertat metas ad solstitialis,
lunaque mensibus id spatium videatur obire,
annua sol in quo consumit tempora cursu.
620 non, inquam, simplex his rebus reddita causast.
nam fieri vel cum primis id posse videtur,
Democriti quod sancta viri sententia ponit,
quanto quaeque magis sint terram sidera propter,
tanto posse minus cum caeli turbine ferri;
625 evanescere enim rapidas illius et acris
imminui supter viris, ideoque relinqui
paulatim solem cum posterioribus signis,
inferior multo quod sit quam fervida signa.
et magis hoc lunam: quanto demissior eius
630 cursus abest procul a caelo terrisque propinquit,
tanto posse minus cum signis tendere cursum.
flaccidiore etiam quanto iam turbine fertur
inferior quam sol, tanto magis omnia signa
hanc adipiscuntur circum praeterque feruntur.
635 propterea fit ut haec ad signum quodque reverti
mobilius videatur, ad hanc quia signa revisunt.
fit quoque ut e mundi transversis partibus aër
alternis certo fluere alter tempore possit,
qui queat aestivis solem detrudere signis
640 brumalis usque ad flexus gelidumque rigorem,
et qui reiciat gelidis a frigoris umbris
aestiferas usque in partis et fervida signa.
et ratione pari lunam stellasque putandumst,
quae volvunt magnos in magnis orbibus annos,
645 aëribus posse alternis e partibus ire.
nonne vides etiam diversis nubila ventis
diversas ire in partis inferna supernis?
qui minus illa queant per magnos aetheris orbis
aestibus inter se diversis sidera ferri?
650 At nox obruit ingenti caligine terras,
aut ubi de longo cursu sol ultima caeli
impulit atque suos efflavit languidus ignis
concussos iterum et labefactos aëre multo,
aut quia sub terras cursum convortere cogit
655 vis eadem, supra quae terras pertulit orbem.
Tempore item certo roseam Matuta per oras
aetheris auroram differt et lumina pandit,

aut quia sol idem, sub terras ille revertens,
anticipat caelum radiis accendere temptans,
660 aut quia conveniunt ignes et semina multa
confluere ardoris consuerunt tempore certo,
quae faciunt solis nova semper lumina gigni;
quod genus Idaeis fama est e montibus altis
dispersos ignis orienti lumine cerni,
665 inde coire globum quasi in unum et conficere orbem.
nec tamen illud in his rebus mirabile debet
esse, quod haec ignis tam certo tempore possint
semina confluere et solis reparare nitorem.
multa videmus enim, certo quae tempore fiunt
670 omnibus in rebus. florescunt tempore certo
arbusta et certo dimittunt tempore florem.
nec minus in certo dentes cadere imperat aetas
tempore et inpubem molli pubescere veste
et pariter mollem malis demittere barbam.
675 fulmina postremo nix imbres nubila venti
non nimis incertis fiunt in partibus anni.
namque ubi sic fuerunt causarum exordia prima
atque ita res mundi cecidere ab origine prima,
consequae quoque iam redeunt ex ordine certo.
680 Crescere itemque dies licet et tabescere noctes,
et minui luces, cum sumant augmina noctis,
aut quia sol idem sub terras atque superne
imparibus currens amfractibus aetheris oras
partit et in partis non aequas dividit orbem,
685 et quod ab alterutra detraxit parte, reponit
eius in adversa tanto plus parte relatus,
donec ad id signum caeli pervenit, ubi anni
nodus nocturnas exaequat lucibus umbras;
nam medio cursu flatus aquilonis et austri
690 distinet aequato caelum discrimine metas
propter signiferi posituram totius orbis,
annua sol in quo concludit tempora serpens,
obliquo terras et caelum lumine lustrans,
ut ratio declarat eorum qui loca caeli
695 omnia dispositis signis ornata notarunt.
aut quia crassior est certis in partibus aër,
sub terris ideo tremulum iubar haesitat ignis
nec penetrare potest facile atque emergere ad ortus;
propterea noctes hiberno tempore longae
700 cessant, dum veniat radiatum insigne diei.
aut etiam, quia sic alternis partibus anni

tardius et citius consuerunt confluere ignes,
qui faciunt solem certa de surgere parte,
propterea fit uti videantur dicere verum.

705 Luna potest solis radiis percussa nitere
inque dies magis id lumen convertere nobis
ad speciem, quantum solis secedit ab orbi,
donique eum contra pleno bene lumine fulsit
atque oriens obitus eius super edita vidit;

710 inde minutatim retro quasi condere lumen
debet item, quanto propius iam solis ad ignem
labitur ex alia signorum parte per orbem;
ut faciunt, lunam qui fingunt esse pilai
consimilem cursusque viam sub sole tenere.

715 est etiam quare proprio cum lumine possit
volvier et varias splendoris reddere formas;
corpus enim licet esse aliud, quod fertur et una
labitur omnimodis occursans officiensque,
nec potis est cerni, quia cassum lumine fertur.

720 versarique potest, globus ut, si forte, pilai
dimidia ex parti candenti lumine tinctus,
versandoque globum variantis edere formas,
donique eam partem, quae cumque est ignibus aucta,
ad speciem vertit nobis oculosque patentis;

725 inde minutatim retro contorquet et aufert
luciferam partem glomeraminis atque pilai;
ut Babylonica Chaldaeum doctrina refutans
astrologorum artem contra convincere tendit,
proinde quasi id fieri nequeat quod pugnat uterque

730 aut minus hoc illo sit cur amplectier ausis.
denique cur nequeat semper nova luna creari
ordine formarum certo certisque figuris
inque dies privos aborisci quaeque creata
atque alia illius reparari in parte locoque,

735 difficilest ratione docere et vincere verbis,
ordine cum videas tam certo multa creari.
it Ver et Venus et Veneris praenuntius ante
pennatus graditur, Zephyri vestigia propter
Flora quibus mater praespargens ante viai

740 cuncta coloribus egregiis et odoribus opplet.
inde loci sequitur Calor aridus et comes una
polverulenta Ceres et etesia flabra aquilonum.
inde Autumnus adit, graditur simul Euhius Euan.
inde aliae tempestates ventique secuntur,

745 altitonans Volturnus et Auster fulmine pollens.

tandem Bruma nives adfert pigrumque rigorem
reddit. Hiemps sequitur crepitans hanc dentibus algu.
quo minus est mirum, si certo tempore luna
gignitur et certo deletur tempore rusus,
750 cum fieri possint tam certo tempore multa.
Solis item quoque defectus lunaeque latebras
pluribus e causis fieri tibi posse putandumst.
nam cur luna queat terram secludere solis
lumine et a terris altum caput obstruere ei,
755 obiciens caecum radiis ardentibus orbem,
tempore eodem aliut facere id non posse putetur
corpus, quod cassum labatur lumine semper?
solque suos etiam dimittere languidus ignis
tempore cur certo nequeat recreareque lumen,
760 cum loca praeteriit flammis infesta per auras,
quae faciunt ignis interstingui atque perire?
et cur terra queat lunam spoliare vicissim
lumine et oppressum solem super ipsa tenere,
menstrua dum rigidas coni perlabitur umbras,
765 tempore eodem aliud nequeat succurrere lunae
corpus vel supra solis perlabier orbem,
quod radios inter rumpat lumenque profusum?
et tamen ipsa suo si fulget luna nitore,
cur nequeat certa mundi languescere parte,
770 dum loca luminibus propriis inimica per exit?
menstrua dum rigidas coni perlabitur umbras.
Quod superest, quoniam magni per caerula mundi
qua fieri quicquid posset ratione resolvi,
solis uti varios cursus lunaeque meatus
775 noscere possemus quae vis et causa cieret,
quove modo possent effecto lumine obire
et neque opinantis tenebris obducere terras,
cum quasi conivent et aperto lumine rursum
omnia convisunt clara loca candida luce,
780 nunc redeo ad mundi novitatem et mollia terrae
arva, novo fetu quid primum in luminis oras
tollere et incertis crerint committere ventis.
Principio genus herbarum viridemque nitorem
terra dedit circum collis camposque per omnis,
785 florida fulserunt viridanti prata colore,
arboribusque datumst variis exinde per auras
crescendi magnum inmissis certamen habenis.
ut pluma atque pili primum saetaeque creantur
quadripedum membris et corpore pennipotentum,

790 sic nova tum tellus herbas virgultaque primum
sustulit, inde loci mortalia saecula creavit
multa modis multis varia ratione coorta.
nam neque de caelo cecidisse animalia possunt,
nec terrestria de salsis exisse lacunis.
795 linquitur ut merito maternum nomen adepta
terra sit, e terra quoniam sunt cuncta creata.
multaque nunc etiam existunt animalia terris
imbribus et calido solis concreta vapore;
quo minus est mirum, si tum sunt plura coorta
800 et maiora, nova tellure atque aethere adulta.
principio genus alituum variaequae volucres
ova relinquebant exclusae tempore verno,
folliculos ut nunc teretis aestate cicadae
lincunt sponte sua victum vitamque petentes.
805 tum tibi terra dedit primum mortalia saecula.
multus enim calor atque umor superabat in arvis.
hoc ubi quaeque loci regio opportuna dabatur,
crescebant uteri terram radicibus apti;
quos ubi tempore maturo pate fecerat aetas
810 infantum, fugiens umorem aurasque petessens,
convertebat ibi natura foramina terrae
et sucum venis cogebat fundere apertis
consimilem lactis, sicut nunc femina quaeque
cum peperit, dulci repletur lacte, quod omnis
815 impetus in mammas convertitur ille alimenti.
terra cibum pueris, vestem vapor, herba cubile
praebebat multa et molli lanugine abundans.
at novitas mundi nec frigora dura ciebat
nec nimios aestus nec magnis viribus auras.
820 omnia enim pariter crescunt et robora sumunt.
Quare etiam atque etiam maternum nomen adepta
terra tenet merito, quoniam genus ipsa creavit
humanum atque animal prope certo tempore fudit
omne quod in magnis bacchatur montibus passim,
825 aëriasque simul volucres variantibus formis.
sed quia finem aliquam pariendi debet habere,
destitit, ut mulier spatio defessa vetusto.
mutat enim mundi naturam totius aetas
ex alioque alius status excipere omnia debet
830 nec manet ulla sui similis res: omnia migrant,
omnia commutat natura et vertere cogit.
namque aliud putrescit et aevo debile languet,
porro aliud succrescit et e contemptibus exit.

sic igitur mundi naturam totius aetas
835 mutat, et ex alio terram status excipit alter,
quod potuit nequeat, possit quod non tulit ante.
Multaque tum tellus etiam portenta creare
conatast mira facie membrisque coorta,
androgynem, interutras necutrumque utrimque remotum,
840 orba pedum partim, manuum viduata vicissim,
muta sine ore etiam, sine vultu caeca reperta,
vinctaque membrorum per totum corpus adhaesu,
nec facere ut possent quicquam nec cedere quoquam
nec vitare malum nec sumere quod volet usus.
845 cetera de genere hoc monstra ac portenta creabat,
ne quiquam, quoniam natura absterruit auctum
nec potuere cupitum aetatis tangere florem
nec reperire cibum nec iungi per Veneris res.
multa videmus enim rebus concurrere debere,
850 ut propagando possint procudere saecula;
pabula primum ut sint, genitalia deinde per artus
semina qua possint membris manare remissis,
feminaque ut maribus coniungi possit, habere,
mutua qui mutant inter se gaudia uterque.
855 Multaque tum interiisse animantum saecula necessest
nec potuisse propagando procudere prolem.
nam quae cumque vides vesci vitalibus auris,
aut dolus aut virtus aut denique mobilitas est
ex ineunte aevo genus id tuta TA reservans.
860 multaque sunt, nobis ex utilitate sua quae
commendata manent, tutelae tradita nostrae.
principio genus acre leonum saeva saecula
tutatast virtus, volpes dolus et fuga cervos.
at levisomna canum fido cum pectore corda,
865 et genus omne quod est veterino semine partum
lanigeraeque simul pecudes et bucera saecula
omnia sunt hominum tutelae tradita, Memmi;
nam cupide fugere feras pacemque secuta
sunt et larga suo sine pabula parta labore,
870 quae damus utilitatis eorum praemia causa.
at quis nil horum tribuit natura, nec ipsa
sponte sua possent ut vivere nec dare nobis
utilitatem aliquam, quare pateremur eorum
praesidio nostro pasci genus esseque tutum,
875 scilicet haec aliis praedae lucroque iacebant
indupedita suis fatalibus omnia vinclis,
donec ad interitum genus id natura redegit.

Sed neque Centauri fuerunt nec tempore in ullo
esse queunt duplici natura et corpore bino
880 ex alienigenis membris compacta, potestas
hinc illinc partis ut sat par esse potissit.
id licet hinc quamvis hebeti cognoscere corde.
principio circum tribus actis impiger annis
florete equus, puer haut quaquam; nam saepe etiam nunc
885 ubera mammarum in somnis lactantia quaeret.
post ubi equum validae vires aetate senecta
membraque deficiunt fugienti languida vita,
tum demum puerili aevo florenta iuventas
officit et molli vestit lanugine malas;
890 ne forte ex homine et veterino semine equorum
conferri credas Centauros posse neque esse,
aut rapidis canibus succinctas semimarinis
corporibus Scyllas et cetera de genere horum,
inter se quorum discordia membra videmus;
895 quae neque florescunt pariter nec robora sumunt
corporibus neque prociunt aetate senecta
nec simili Venere ardescunt nec moribus unis
conveniunt neque sunt eadem iucunda per artus.
quippe videre licet pinguescere saepe cicuta
900 barbigeras pecudes, homini quae est acre venenum.
flamma quidem vero cum corpora fulva leonum
tam soleat torrere atque urere quam genus omne
visceris in terris quod cumque et sanguinis extet,
qui fieri potuit, triplici cum corpore ut una,
905 prima leo, postrema draco, media ipsa, Chimaera
ore foras acrem flaret de corpore flammam?
quare etiam tellure nova caeloque recenti
taliter qui fingit potuisse animalia gigni,
nexus in hoc uno novitatis nomine inani,
910 multa licet simili ratione effutiat ore,
aurea tum dicat per terras flumina vulgo
fluxisse et gemmis florere arbusta suæsse
aut hominem tanto membrorum esse impete natum,
trans maria alta pedum nisus ut ponere posset
915 et manibus totum circum se vertere caelum.
nam quod multa fuere in terris semina rerum,
tempore quo primum tellus animalia fudit,
nil tamen est signi mixtas potuisse creari
inter se pecudes compactaque membra animantum,
920 propterea quia quae de terris nunc quoque abundant
herbarum genera ac fruges arbustaque laeta

non tamen inter se possunt complexa creari,
sed res quaeque suo ritu procedit et omnes
foedere naturae certo discrimina servant.

925 Et genus humanum multo fuit illud in arvis
durius, ut decuit, tellus quod dura creasset,
et maioribus et solidis magis ossibus intus
fundatum, validis aptum per viscera nervis,
nec facile ex aestu nec frigore quod caperetur

930 nec novitate cibi nec labi corporis ulla.
multaque per caelum solis volventia lustra
volgivago vitam tractabant more ferarum.
nec robustus erat curvi moderator aratri
quisquam, nec scibat ferro molirier arva

935 nec nova defodere in terram virgulta neque altis
arboribus veteres decidere falcibus ramos.

quod sol atque imbres dederant, quod terra crearat
sponte sua, satis id placabat pectora donum.

glandiferas inter curabant corpora quercus

940 plerumque; et quae nunc hiberno tempore cernis
arbita puniceo fieri matura colore,
plurima tum tellus etiam maiora ferebat.

multaque praeterea novitas tum florida mundi
pabula dura tulit, miseris mortalibus ampla.

945 at sedare sitim fluvii fontesque vocabant,
ut nunc montibus e magnis decursus aquai
claricitat late sitientia saecula ferarum.

denique nota vagis silvestria templa tenebant
nympharum, quibus e scibant umore fluenta

950 lubrica proluvie larga lavere umida saxa,
umida saxa, super viridi stillantia musco,
et partim plano scatere atque erumpere campo.

necdum res igni scibant tractare neque uti
pellibus et spoliis corpus vestire ferarum,

955 sed nemora atque cavos montis silvasque colebant
et frutices inter condebant squalida membra
verbera ventorum vitare imbrisque coacti.

nec commune bonum poterant spectare neque ullis
moribus inter se scibant nec legibus uti.

960 quod cuique obtulerat praedae fortuna, ferebat
sponte sua sibi quisque valere et vivere doctus.

et Venus in silvis iungebat corpora amantum;
conciliabat enim vel mutua quamque cupido
vel violenta viri vis atque inpena libido

965 vel pretium, glandes atque arbita vel pira lecta.

et manuum mira freti virtute pedumque
consectabantur silvestria saecula ferarum
missilibus saxis et magno pondere clavae.
multaque vincebant, vitabant pauca latebris;
970 saetigerisque pares subus silvestria membra
nuda dabant terrae nocturno tempore capti,
circum se foliis ac frondibus involventes.
nec plangore diem magno solemque per agros
quaerebant pavidum palantes noctis in umbris,
975 sed taciti respectabant somnoque sepulti,
dum rosea face sol inferret lumina caelo.
a parvis quod enim consueverant cernere semper
alternis tenebras et lucem tempore gigni,
non erat ut fieri posset mirari umquam
980 nec diffidere, ne terras aeterna teneret
nox in perpetuum detracto lumine solis.
sed magis illud erat curae, quod saecula ferarum
infestam miseris faciebant saepe quietem.
eiectique domo fugiebant saxea tecta
985 spumigeri suis adventu validique leonis
atque intempesta cedebant nocte paventes
hospitibus saevis instrata cubilia fronde.
Nec nimio tum plus quam nunc mortalia saecula
dulcia linquebant lamentis lumina vitae.
990 unus enim tum quisque magis deprensus eorum
pabula viva feris praebebat, dentibus haustus,
et nemora ac montis gemitu silvasque replebat
viva videns vivo sepeliri viscera busto.
at quos effugium servarat corpore adeso,
995 posterius tremulas super ulcera tetra tenentes
palmas horridis accubant vocibus Orcum,
doneque eos vita privarent vermina saeva
expertis opis, ignaros quid vulnera vellent.
at non multa virum sub signis milia ducta
1000 una dies dabat exitio nec turbida ponti
aequora lidebant navis ad saxa virosque.
nam temere in cassum frustra mare saepe coortum
saevibat leviterque minas ponebat inanis,
nec poterat quemquam placidi pellacia ponti
1005 subdola pellicere in fraudem ridentibus undis.
improba navigii ratio tum caeca iacebat.
tum penuria deinde cibi languentia leto
membra dabat, contra nunc rerum copia mersat.
illi imprudentes ipsi sibi saepe venenum

1010 vergebant, nunc dant aliis sollertius ipsi.
Inde casas postquam ac pellis ignemque pararunt
et mulier coniuncta viro concessit in unum

* * *

cognita sunt, prolemque ex se videre creatam,
tum genus humanum primum mollescere coepit.
1015 ignis enim curavit, ut alsia corpora frigus
non ita iam possent caeli sub tegmine ferre,
et Venus inminuit viris puerique parentum
blanditiis facile ingenium fregere superbum.
tunc et amicitiam coeperunt iungere aventes
1020 finitimi inter se nec laedere nec violari,
et pueros commendarunt muliebrique saeculum,
vocibus et gestu cum balbe significarent
imbecillorum esse aequum misererier omnis.
nec tamen omnimodis poterat concordia gigni,
1025 sed bona magnaue pars servabat foedera caste;
aut genus humanum iam tum foret omne peremptum
nec potuisset adhuc perducere saecula propago.
At varios linguae sonitus natura subegit
mittere et utilitas expressit nomina rerum,
1030 non alia longe ratione atque ipsa videtur
protrahere ad gestum pueros infantia linguae,
cum facit ut digito quae sint praesentia monstrent.
sentit enim vim quisque suam quod possit abuti.
cornua nata prius vitulo quam frontibus extant,
1035 illis iratus petit atque infestus inurget.
at catuli pantherarum scymnique leonum
unguibus ac pedibus iam tum morsuque repugnant,
vix etiam cum sunt dentes unguisque creati.
alituum porro genus alis omne videmus
1040 fidere et a pennis tremulum petere auxiliatum.
proinde putare aliquem tum nomina distribuisse
rebus et inde homines didicisse vocabula prima,
desiperest. nam cur hic posset cuncta notare
vocibus et varios sonitus emittere linguae,
1045 tempore eodem alii facere id non quisse putentur?
praeterea si non alii quoque vocibus usi
inter se fuerant, unde insita notities est
utilitatis et unde data est huic prima potestas,
quid vellet facere ut sciret animoque videret?
1050 cogere item pluris unus victosque domare
non poterat, rerum ut perdiscere nomina vellent.

nec ratione docere ulla suadereque surdis,
quid sit opus facto, facilest; neque enim paterentur
nec ratione ulla sibi ferrent amplius auris
1055 vocis inauditos sonitus obtundere frustra.
postremo quid in hac mirabile tantoperest re,
si genus humanum, cui vox et lingua vigeret,
pro vario sensu varia res voce notaret?
cum pecudes mutae, cum denique saecla ferarum
1060 dissimilis soleant voces variasque ciere,
cum metus aut dolor est et cum iam gaudia gliscunt.
quippe etenim licet id rebus cognoscere apertis.
inritata canum cum primum magna Molossum
mollia ricta fremunt duros nudantia dentes,
1065 longe alio sonitu rabies restricta minatur,
et cum iam latrant et vocibus omnia complent;
at catulos blande cum lingua lambere temptant
aut ubi eos lactant, pedibus morsuque potentes
suspensis teneros imitantur dentibus haustus,
1070 longe alio pacto gannitu vocis adulant,
et cum deserti baubantur in aedibus, aut cum
plorantis fugiunt summisso corpore plagas.
denique non hinnitus item differre videtur,
inter equas ubi equus florenti aetate iuvenus
1075 pinnigeri saevit calcaribus ictus Amoris
et fremitum patulis sub naribus edit ad arma,
et cum sic alias concussis artibus hinnit?
postremo genus alituum variaequae volucres,
accipitres atque ossifragae mergique marinis
1080 fluctibus in salso victum vitamque petentes,
longe alias alio iaciunt in tempore voces,
et quom de victu certant praedaeque repugnant.
et partim mutant cum tempestatibus una
raucisonos cantus, cornicum ut saecla vetusta
1085 corvorumque gregis ubi aquam dicuntur et imbris
poscere et inter dum ventos aurasque vocare.
ergo si varii sensus animalia cogunt,
muta tamen cum sint, varias emittere voces,
quanto mortalis magis aequumst tum potuisse
1090 dissimilis alia atque alia res voce notare!
Illud in his rebus tacitus ne forte requiras,
fulmen detulit in terram mortalibus ignem
primitus, inde omnis flammarum diditur ardor;
multa videmus enim caelestibus insita flammis
1095 fulgere, cum caeli donavit plaga vaporis.

et ramosa tamen cum ventis pulsa vacillans
aestuat in ramos incumbens arboris arbor,
exprimitur validis extritus viribus ignis,
emicat inter dum flammai fervidus ardor,
1100 mutua dum inter se rami stirpesque teruntur.
quorum utrumque dedisse potest mortalibus ignem.
inde cibum quoquere ac flammae mollire vapore
sol docuit, quoniam mitescere multa videbant
verberibus radiorum atque aestu victa per agros.
1105 Inque dies magis hi victum vitamque priorem
commutare novis monstrabant rebus et igni,
ingenio qui praestabant et corde vigeant.
condere coeperunt urbis arcemque locare
praesidium reges ipsi sibi perfugiumque,
1110 et pecudes et agros divisere atque dedere
pro facie cuiusque et viribus ingenioque;
nam facies multum valuit viresque vigeant.
posterius res inventast aurumque repertum,
quod facile et validis et pulchris dempsit honorem;
1115 divitioris enim sectam plerumque secuntur
quam lubet et fortes et pulchro corpore creti.
quod si quis vera vitam ratione gubernet,
divitiae grandes homini sunt vivere parce
aequo animo; neque enim est umquam penuria parvi.
1120 at claros homines voluerunt se atque potentes,
ut fundamento stabili fortuna maneret
et placidam possent opulenti degere vitam,
ne quiquam, quoniam ad summum succedere honorem
certantes iter infestum fecere viai,
1125 et tamen e summo, quasi fulmen, deicit ictos
invidia inter dum contemptim in Tartara taetra;
invidia quoniam ceu fulmine summa vaporant
plerumque et quae sunt aliis magis edita cumque;
ut satius multo iam sit parere quietum
1130 quam regere imperio res velle et regna tenere.
proinde sine in cassum defessi sanguine sudent,
angustum per iter luctantes ambitionis;
quandoquidem sapiunt alieno ex ore petuntque
res ex auditis potius quam sensibus ipsis,
1135 nec magis id nunc est neque erit mox quam fuit ante.
Ergo regibus occisis subversa iacebat
pristina maiestas soliorum et sceptrum superba,
et capitis summi praeclarum insigne cruentum
sub pedibus vulgi magnum lugebat honorem;

1140 nam cupide conculcatur nimis ante metutum.
res itaque ad summam faecem turbasque redibat,
imperium sibi cum ac summatum quisque petebat.
inde magistratum partim docuere creare
iuraque constituere, ut vellent legibus uti.

1145 nam genus humanum, defessum vi colere aevom,
ex inimiciis languebat; quo magis ipsum
sponte sua cecidit sub leges artaque iura.
acrius ex ira quod enim se quisque parabat
ulcisci quam nunc concessumst legibus aequis,
1150 hanc ob rem est homines pertaesum vi colere aevom.
inde metus maculat poenarum praemia vitae.
circumretit enim vis atque iniuria quemque

atque unde exortast, ad eum plerumque revertit,
nec facilest placidam ac pacatam degere vitam

1155 qui violat factis communia foedera pacis.
etsi fallit enim divom genus humanumque,
perpetuo tamen id fore clam diffidere debet;
quippe ubi se multi per somnia saepe loquentes
aut morbo delirantes protraxe ferantur

1160 et celata mala in medium et peccata dedisse.
Nunc quae causa deum per magnas numina gentis
pervulgarit et ararum compleverit urbis
suscipiendaeque curarit sollemnia sacra,
quae nunc in magnis florent sacra rebus locisque,

1165 unde etiam nunc est mortalibus insitus horror,
qui delubra deum nova toto suscitatur orbi
terrarum et festis cogit celebrare diebus,
non ita difficilest rationem reddere verbis.

quippe etenim iam tum divom mortalia saecula
1170 egregias animo facies vigilante videbant
et magis in somnis mirando corporis auctu.
his igitur sensum tribuebant propterea quod
membra movere videbantur vocesque superbas
mittere pro facie praeclara et viribus amplis.

1175 aeternamque dabant vitam, quia semper eorum
subpeditabatur facies et forma manebat,
et tamen omnino quod tantis viribus auctos
non temere ulla vi convinci posse putabant.

fortunisque ideo longe praestare putabant,
1180 quod mortis timor haut quemquam vexaret eorum,
et simul in somnis quia multa et mira videbant
efficere et nullum capere ipsos inde laborem.
praeterea caeli rationes ordine certo

et varia annorum cernebant tempora verti
1185 nec poterant quibus id fieret cognoscere causas.
ergo perfugium sibi habebant omnia divis
tradere et illorum nutu facere omnia flecti.
in caeloque deum sedes et templa locarunt,
per caelum volvi quia nox et luna videtur,
1190 luna dies et nox et noctis signa severa
noctivagaeque faces caeli flammaeque volantes,
nubila sol imbres nix venti fulmina grando
et rapidi fremitus et murmura magna minarum.
O genus infelix humanum, talia divis
1195 cum tribuit facta atque iras adiunxit acerbis!
quantos tum gemitus ipsi sibi, quantaque nobis
volnera, quas lacrimas peperere minoribus nostris!
nec pietas ullast velatum saepe videri
vertier ad lapidem atque omnis accedere ad aras
1200 nec procumbere humi prostratum et pandere palmas
ante deum delubra nec aras sanguine multo
spargere quadrupedum nec votis nectere vota,
sed mage pacata posse omnia mente tueri.
nam cum suspicimus magni caelestia mundi
1205 templa super stellisque micantibus aethera fixum,
et venit in mentem solis lunaeque viarum,
tunc aliis oppressa malis in pectora cura
illa quoque expergefatum caput erigere inquit,
ne quae forte deum nobis inmensa potestas
1210 sit, vario motu quae candida sidera verset;
temptat enim dubiam mentem rationis egestas,
ecquae nam fuerit mundi genitalis origo,
et simul ecquae sit finis, quoad moenia mundi
et taciti motus hunc possint ferre laborem,
1215 an divinitus aeterna donata salute
perpetuo possint aevi labentia tractu
inmensi validas aevi contemnere viris.
praeterea cui non animus formidine divum
contrahitur, cui non correpunt membra pavore,
1220 fulminis horribili cum plaga torrida tellus
contremat et magnum percurrunt murmura caelum?
non populi gentesque tremunt, regesque superbi
corripiunt divum percussi membra timore,
ne quod ob admissum foede dictumve superbe
1225 poenarum grave sit solvendi tempus adauctum?
summa etiam cum vis violenti per mare venti
induperatorem classis super aequora verrit

cum validis pariter legionibus atque elephantis,
non divom pacem votis adit ac prece quaesit
1230 ventorum pavidus paces animasque secundas?
ne quiquam, quoniam violento turbine saepe
corruptus nihilo fertur minus ad vada leti.
usque adeo res humanas vis abdita quaedam
opferit et pulchros fascis saevasque secures
1235 proculcare ac ludibrio sibi habere videtur.
denique sub pedibus tellus cum tota vacillat
concussaeque cadunt urbes dubiaeque minantur,
quid mirum si se temnunt mortalia saecula
atque potestatis magnas mirasque relinquunt
1240 in rebus viris divum, quae cuncta gubernent?
Quod super est, aes atque aurum ferrumque repertumst
et simul argenti pondus plumbique potestas,
ignis ubi ingentis silvas ardore cremarat
montibus in magnis, seu caelo fulmine misso,
1245 sive quod inter se bellum silvestre gerentes
hostibus intulerant ignem formidinis ergo,
sive quod inducti terrae bonitate volebant
pandere agros pinguis et pascua reddere rura,
sive feras interficere et ditescere praeda;
1250 nam fovea atque igni prius est venarier ortum
quam saepire plagis saltum canibusque ciere.
quicquid id est, qua cumque e causa flammeus ardor
horribili sonitu silvas exederat altis
a radicibus et terram percoxerat igni,
1255 manabat venis ferventibus in loca terrae
concava conveniens argenti rivus et auri,
aeris item et plumbi. quae cum concreta videbant
posterius claro in terra splendere colore,
tollebant nitido capti levique lepore,
1260 et simili formata videbant esse figura
atque lacunarum fuerant vestigia cuique.
tum penetrabat eos posse haec liquefacta calore
quamlibet in formam et faciem decurrere rerum,
et prorsum quamvis in acuta ac tenvia posse
1265 mucronum duci fastigia procudendo,
ut sibi tela parent silvasque ut caedere possint
materiemque dolare et levia radere tigna
et terebrare etiam ac pertundere perque forare.
nec minus argento facere haec auroque parabant
1270 quam validi primum violentis viribus aeris,
ne quiquam, quoniam cedebat victa potestas

neq poterant pariter durum sufferre laborem.
nam fuit in pretio magis aes aurumque iacebat
propter inutilitatem hebeti mucrone retusum;
1275 nunc iacet aes, aurum in summum successit honorem.
sic volvenda aetas commutat tempora rerum.
quod fuit in pretio, fit nullo denique honore;
porro aliud succedit et e contemptibus exit
inque dies magis adpetitur floretque repertum
1280 laudibus et miro est mortalis inter honore.
Nunc tibi quo pacto ferri natura reperta
sit facilest ipsi per te cognoscere, Memmi.
arma antiqua manus ungues dentesque fuerunt
et lapides et item silvarum fragmina rami
1285 et flamma atque ignes, post quam sunt cognita primum.
posterius ferri vis est aerisque reperta.
et prior aeris erat quam ferri cognitus usus,
quo facilis magis est natura et copia maior.
aere solum terrae tractabant, aereque belli
1290 miscebant fluctus et vulnere vasta serebant
et pecus atque agros adimebant; nam facile ollis
omnia cedebant armatis nuda et inerma.
inde minutatim processit ferreus ensis
versaue in obprobrium species est falcis ahenae,
1295 et ferro coepere solum proscindere terrae
exaequataque sunt creperi certamina belli.
et prius est armatum in equi conscendere costas
et moderarier hunc frenis dextraue vigere
quam biiugo curru belli temptare pericla.
1300 et biiugo prius est quam bis coniungere binos
et quam falciferos armatum escendere currus.
inde boves Lucas turrito corpore, tetras,
anguimanus, belli docuerunt volnere Poeni
sufferre et magnas Martis turbare catervas.
1305 sic alid ex alio peperit discordia tristis,
horribile humanis quod gentibus esset in armis,
inque dies belli terroribus addidit augmen.
Temptarunt etiam tauros in moenere belli
expertique sues saevos sunt mittere in hostis.
1310 et validos partim prae se misere leones
cum doctoribus armatis saevisque magistris,
qui moderarier his possent vinclisque tenere,
ne quiquam, quoniam permixta caede calentes
turbabant saevi nullo discrimine turmas,
1315 terrificas capitum quatientis undique cristas,

nec poterant equites fremitu perterrita equorum
pectora mulcere et frenis convertere in hostis.
inritata leae iaciebant corpora saltu
undique et adversum venientibus ora patebant
1320 et nec opinantis a tergo deripiebant
deplexaeque dabant in terram volnere victos,
morsibus adfixae validis atque unguibus uncis.
iactabantque suos tauri pedibusque terebant
et latera ac ventres hauribant suppter equorum
1325 cornibus et terram minitanti mente ruebant.
et validis socios caedebant dentibus apri
tela infracta suo tingentes sanguine saevi
in se fracta suo tingentes sanguine tela,
permixtasque dabant equitum peditumque ruinas.
1330 nam transversa feros exhibant dentis adactus
iumenta aut pedibus ventos erecta petebant,
ne quiquam, quoniam ab nervis succisa videres
concidere atque gravi terram consternere casu.
si quos ante domi domitos satis esse putabant,
1335 effervescere cernebant in rebus agundis
volneribus clamore fuga terrore tumultu,
nec poterant ullam partem reducere eorum;
diffugiebat enim varium genus omne ferarum,
ut nunc saepe boves Lucae ferro male mactae
1340 diffugiunt, fera facta suis cum multa dedere.
Sed facere id non tam vincendi spe voluerunt;
quam dare quod gement hostes, ipsique perire,
qui numero diffidebant armisque vacabant,
si fuit ut facerent. sed vix adducor ut ante
1345 non quierint animo praesentire atque videre,
quam commune malum fieret foedumque, futurum.
et magis id possis factum contendere in omni
in variis mundis varia ratione creatis,
quam certo atque uno terrarum quolibet orbi.
1350 Nexilis ante fuit vestis quam textile tegmen.
textile post ferrumst, quia ferro tela paratur,
nec ratione alia possunt tam levia gigni
insilia ac fusi, radii, scapique sonantes.
et facere ante viros lanam natura coëgit
1355 quam muliebre genus; nam longe praestat in arte
et sollertius est multo genus omne virile;
agricolae donec vitio vertere severi,
ut muliebribus id manibus concedere vellent
atque ipsi pariter durum sufferre laborem

1360 atque opere in duro durarent membra manusque.

At specimen sationis et insitionis origo
ipsa fuit rerum primum natura creatrix,
arboribus quoniam bacae glandesque caducae
tempestita dabant pullorum examina supter;

1365 unde etiam libitumst stirpis committere ramis
et nova defodere in terram virgulta per agros.
inde aliam atque aliam culturam dulcis agelli
temptabant fructusque feros mansuescere terra
cernebant indulgendo blandeque colendo.

1370 inque dies magis in montem succedere silvas
cogebant infraque locum concedere cultis,
prata lacus rivos segetes vinetaque laeta
collibus et campis ut haberent, atque olearum
caerula distinguens inter plaga currere posset

1375 per tumulos et convallis camposque profusa;
ut nunc esse vides vario distincta lepore
omnia, quae pomis intersita dulcibus ornant
arbustisque tenent felicibus opsita circum.

At liquidas avium voces imitarier ore

1380 ante fuit multo quam levia carmina cantu
concelebrare homines possent aurisque iuvare.
et zephyri cava per calamorum sibila primum
agrestis docuere cavas inflare cicutas.

inde minutatim dulcis didicere querellas,

1385 tibia quas fundit digitis pulsata canentum,
avia per nemora ac silvas saltusque reperta,
per loca pastorum deserta atque otia dia.
sic unum quicquid paulatim protrahit aetas
in medium ratioque in luminis eruit oras.

1390 haec animos ollis mulcebant atque iuvabant
cum satiate cibi; nam tum sunt omnia cordi.
saepe itaque inter se prostrati in gramine molli
propter aquae rivom sub ramis arboris altae.

non magnis opibus iucunde corpora habebant,

1395 praesertim cum tempestas ridebat et anni
tempora pingebant viridantis floribus herbas.

tum ioca, tum sermo, tum dulces esse cachinni
consuerant; agrestis enim tum musa vigebat.

tum caput atque umeros plexis redimire coronis

1400 floribus et foliis lascivia laeta movebat,
atque extra numerum procedere membra moventes
duriter et duro terram pede pellere matrem;
unde oriebantur risus dulcesque cachinni,

omnia quod nova tum magis haec et mira vigeant.

1405 et vigilantibus hinc aderant solacia somno
ducere multimodis voces et flectere cantus
et supera calamos unco percurrere labro;
unde etiam vigiles nunc haec accepta tuentur.
et numerum servare genus didicere, neque hilo

1410 maiore interea capiunt dulcedine fructum
quam silvestre genus capiebat terrigenarum.
nam quod adest praesto, nisi quid cognovimus ante
suavius, in primis placet et pollere videtur,
posteriorque fere melior res illa reperta

1415 perdit et immutat sensus ad pristina quaeque.
sic odium coepit glandis, sic illa relicta
strata cubilia sunt herbis et frondibus aucta.

pellis item cecidit vestis contempta ferina;
quam reor invidia tali tunc esse repertam,
1420 ut letum insidiis qui gessit primus obiret,
et tamen inter eos distractam sanguine multo
disperiisse neque in fructum convertere quisse.
tunc igitur pelles, nunc aurum et purpura curis
exercent hominum vitam belloque fatigant;

1425 quo magis in nobis, ut opinor, culpa resedit.
frigus enim nudos sine pellibus excruciabat
terrigenas; at nos nil laedit veste carere
purpurea atque auro signisque ingentibus apta,
dum plebeia tamen sit, quae defendere possit.

1430 Ergo hominum genus in cassum frustra laborat
semper et in curis consumit inanibus aevom,
ni mirum quia non cognovit quae sit habendi
finis et omnino quoad crescat vera voluptas;
idque minutatim vitam provexit in altum

1435 et belli magnos commovit funditus aestus.
at vigiles mundi magnum versatile templum
sol et luna suo lustrantes lumine circum
perdocuere homines annorum tempora verti
et certa ratione geri rem atque ordine certo.

1440 Iam validis saepti degebant turribus aevom,
et divisa colebatur discretaque tellus,
tum mare velivolis florebat navibus ponti,
auxilia ac socios iam pacto foedere habebant,
carminibus cum res gestas coepere poëtae

1445 tradere; nec multo prius sunt elementa reperta.
propterea quid sit prius actum respicere aetas
nostra nequit, nisi qua ratio vestigia monstrat.

Navigia atque agri culturas moenia leges
arma vias vestes et cetera de genere horum,
¹⁴⁵⁰ praemia, delicias quoque vitae funditus omnis,
carmina, picturas et daedala signa polita
usus et impigrae simul experientia mentis
paulatim docuit pedetemptim progredientis.
sic unum quicquid paulatim protrahit aetas
¹⁴⁵⁵ in medium ratioque in luminis erigit oras;
namque alid ex alio clarescere corde videbant,
artibus ad summum donec venere cacumen.

Liber Sextus

Primae frugiparos fetus mortalibus aegris
dididerunt quondam praeclaro nomine Athenae
et recreaverunt vitam legesque rogarunt
et primae dederunt solacia dulcia vitae,
5 cum genuere virum tali cum corde repertum,
omnia veridico qui quondam ex ore profudit;
cuius et extincti propter divina reperta
divolgata vetus iam ad caelum gloria fertur.
nam cum vidit hic ad victum quae flagitat usus
10 omnia iam ferme mortalibus esse parata
et, pro quam possent, vitam consistere tutam,
divitiis homines et honore et laude potentis
affluere atque bona gnatorum excellere fama,
nec minus esse domi cuiquam tamen anxia cordi,
15 atque animi ingratis vitam vexare sine ulla
pausa atque infestis cogi saevire querellis,
intellegit ibi vitium vas efficere ipsum
omniaque illius vitio corrumpier intus,
quae conlata foris et commoda cumque venirent;
20 partim quod fluxum pertusumque esse videbat,
ut nulla posset ratione explerier umquam,
partim quod taetro quasi conspurcare sapore
omnia cernebat, quae cumque receperat, intus.
veridicis igitur purgavit pectora dictis
25 et finem statuit cuppedinis atque timoris
exposuitque bonum summum, quo tendimus omnes,
quid foret, atque viam monstravit, tramite parvo
qua possemus ad id recto contendere cursu,
quidve mali foret in rebus mortalibus passim,
30 quod fieret naturali varieque volaret
seu casu seu vi, quod sic natura parasset,
et quibus e portis occurri cuique deceret,
et genus humanum frustra plerumque probavit
volvere curarum tristis in pectore fluctus.
35 nam vel uti pueri trepidant atque omnia caecis
in tenebris metuunt, sic nos in luce timemus
inter dum, nihilo quae sunt metuenda magis quam
quae pueri in tenebris pavitant finguntque futura.
hunc igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque necessest
40 non radii solis nec lucida tela diei
discutiant, sed naturae species ratioque.

quo magis inceptum pergam pertexere dictis.
Et quoniam docui mundi mortalia templa
esse et nativo consistere corpore caelum,
45 et quae cumque in eo fiunt fierique necessest
pleraque dissolui, qui restant percipe porro,
quandoquidem semel insignem conscendere currum

* * *

tu mihi supremae praescripta ad candida callis
currenti spatium praemonstra, callida musa
50 Calliope, requies hominum divomque voluptas,
te duce ut insigni capiam cum laude coronam.

* * *

ventorum existant, placentur ut omnia rursum

* * *

quae fuerint, sint placato conversa furore.
cetera quae fieri in terris caeloque tuentur
55 mortales, pavidis cum pendent mentibus saepe
et faciunt animos humilis formidine divom
depressosque premunt ad terram propterea quod
ignorantia causarum conferre deorum
cogit ad imperium res et concedere regnum.
60 quorum operum causas nulla ratione videre
possunt ac fieri divino numine rentur.
nam bene qui didicere deos securum agere aevom,
si tamen interea mirantur qua ratione
quaeque geri possint, praesertim rebus in illis
65 quae supera caput aetheriis cernuntur in oris,
rursus in antiquas referuntur religionis
et dominos acris adsciscunt, omnia posse
quos miseri credunt, ignari quid queat esse,
quid nequeat, finita potestas denique cuique
70 qua nam sit ratione atque alte terminus haerens;
quo magis errantes caeca ratione feruntur.
quae nisi respuis ex animo longeque remittis
dis indigna putare alienaque pacis eorum,
delibata deum per te tibi numina sancta
75 saepe oberunt; non quo violari summa deum vis
possit, ut ex ira poenas petere inbibat acris,
sed quia tute tibi placida cum pace quietos

constitues magnos irarum volvere fluctus,
nec delubra deum placido cum pectore adibis,
80 nec de corpore quae sancto simulacra feruntur
in mentes hominum divinae nuntia formae,
suscipere haec animi tranquilla pace valebis.
inde videre licet qualis iam vita sequatur.
quam quidem ut a nobis ratio verissima longe
85 reiciat, quamquam sunt a me multa profecta,
multa tamen restant et sunt ornanda politis
versibus; est ratio caeliQUE ignisque tenenda,
sunt tempestates et fulmina clara canenda,
quid faciant et qua de causa cumque ferantur;
90 ne trepides caeli divisis partibus amens,
unde volans ignis pervenerit aut in utram se
verterit hinc partim, quo pacto per loca saepta
insinuarit, et hinc dominatus ut extulerit se.
quorum operum causas nulla ratione videre
95 possunt ac fieri divino numine rentur.
Principio tonitru quatiuntur caerula caeli
propterea quia concurrunt sublime volantes
aetheriae nubes contra pugnantibus ventis.
nec fit enim sonitus caeli de parte serena,
100 verum ubi cumque magis denso sunt agmine nubes,
tam magis hinc magno fremitus fit murmure saepe.
praeterea neque tam condense corpore nubes
esse queunt quam sunt lapides ac ligna, neque autem
tam tenues quam sunt nebulae fumique volantes;
105 nam cadere aut bruto deberent pondere pressae
ut lapides, aut ut fumus constare nequirent
nec cohibere nives gelidas et grandinis imbris.
Dant etiam sonitum patuli super aequora mundi,
carbasus ut quondam magnis intenta theatri
110 dat crepitum malos inter iactata trabesque,
inter dum perscissa furit petulantibus auris
et fragilis sonitus chartarum commeditatur;
id quoque enim genus in tonitru cognoscere possis,
aut ubi suspensam vestem chartasque volantis
115 verberibus venti versant planguntque per auras.
fit quoque enim inter dum ut non tam concurrere nubes
frontibus adversis possint quam de latere ire
diverso motu radentes corpora tractim,
aridus unde auris terget sonus ille diuque
120 ducitur, exierunt donec regionibus artis.
Hoc etiam pacto tonitru concussa videntur

omnia saepe gravi tremere et divolsa repente
maxima dissiluisse capacis moenia mundi,
cum subito validi venti conlecta procella
125 nubibus intorsit sese conclusaque ibidem
turbine versanti magis ac magis undique nubem
cogit uti fiat spisso cava corpore circum,
post ubi conminuit vis eius et impetus acer,
tum perterricrepro sonitu dat scissa fragorem.
130 nec mirum, cum plena animae vensicula parva
saepe haud dat parvum sonitum displosa repente.
Est etiam ratio, cum venti nubila perflant,
ut sonitus faciant; etenim ramosa videmus
nubila saepe modis multis atque aspera ferri;
135 scilicet ut, crebram silvam cum flamina cauri
perflant, dant sonitum frondes ramique fragorem.
Fit quoque ut inter dum validi vis incita venti
perscindat nubem perfringens impete recto;
nam quid possit ibi flatus manifesta docet res,
140 hic, ubi lenior est, in terra cum tamen alta
arbusta evolvens radicibus haurit ab imis.
sunt etiam fluctus per nubila, qui quasi murmur
dant in frangendo graviter; quod item fit in altis
fluminibus magnoque mari, cum frangitur aestus.
145 Fit quoque, ubi e nubi in nubem vis incidit ardens
fulminis; haec multo si forte umore recepit
ignem, continuo magno clamore trucidat;
ut calidis candens ferrum e fornacibus olim
stridit, ubi in gelidum propter demersimus imbrem.
150 Aridior porro si nubes accipit ignem,
uritur ingenti sonitu succensa repente,
lauricomos ut si per montis flamma vagetur
turbine ventorum comburens impete magno;
nec res ulla magis quam Phoebi Delphica laurus
155 terribili sonitu flamma crepitante crematur.
Denique saepe geli multus fragor atque ruina
grandinis in magnis sonitum dat nubibus alte;
ventus enim cum confercit, franguntur in artum
concreti montes nimborum et grandine mixti.
160 Fulgit item, nubes ignis cum semina multa
excussere suo concursu, ceu lapidem si
percutiat lapis aut ferrum; nam tum quoque lumen
exilit et claras scintillas dissipat ignis.
sed tonitrum fit uti post auribus accipiamus,
165 fulgere quam cernant oculi, quia semper ad auris

tardius adveniunt quam visum quae moveant res.
id licet hinc etiam cognoscere: caedere si quem
incipiti videas ferro procul arboris auctum,
ante fit ut cernas ictum quam plaga per auris
170 det sonitum; sic fulgorem quoque cernimus ante
quam tonitrum accipimus, pariter qui mittitur igni
e simili causa, concursu natus eodem.

Hoc etiam pacto volucris loca lumine tingunt
nubes et tremulo tempestas impete fulgit.

175 ventus ubi invasit nubem et versatus ibidem
fecit ut ante cavam docui spissescere nubem,
mobilitate sua fervescit; ut omnia motu
percalefacta vides ardescere, plumbea vero
glans etiam longo cursu volvenda liquescit.

180 ergo fervidus hic nubem cum perscidit atram,
dissipat ardoris quasi per vim expressa repente
semina, quae faciunt nictantia fulgura flammae;
inde sonus sequitur, qui tardius adlicit auris
quam quae perveniunt oculorum ad lumina nostra.

185 scilicet hoc densis fit nubibus et simul alte
extractis aliis alias super impete miro.
ne tibi sit frudi quod nos inferne videmus
quam sint lata magis quam sursum extracta quid extent.

contemplator enim, cum montibus adsimulata

190 nubila portabunt venti transversa per auras,
aut ubi per magnos montis cumulata videbis
insuper esse aliis alia atque urgere superna
in statione locata sepultis undique ventis;

tum poteris magnas moles cognoscere eorum

195 speluncasque vel ut saxis pendentibus structas
cernere, quas venti cum tempestate coorta

conplerunt, magno indignantur murmure clausi
nubibus in caveisque ferarum more minantur,
nunc hinc nunc illinc fremitus per nubila mittunt,
200 quaerentesque viam circum versantur et ignis
semina convolvunt e nubibus atque ita cogunt
multa rotantque cavis flammam fornacibus intus,
donec divolsa fulserunt nube corusci.

Hac etiam fit uti de causa mobilis ille

205 devolet in terram liquidi color aureus ignis,
semina quod nubes ipsas permulta necessust
ignis habere; etenim cum sunt umore sine ullo,
flammeus est plerumque colos et splendidus ollis.
quippe etenim solis de lumine multa necessest

210 concipere, ut merito rubeant ignesque profundant.
hasce igitur cum ventus agens contrusit in unum
compressitque locum cogens, expressa profundunt
semina, quae faciunt flammae fulgere colores.
Fulgit item, cum rarescunt quoque nubila caeli;
215 nam cum ventus eas leviter diducit euntis
dissoluitque, cadant ingratus illa necessest
semina quae faciunt fulgorem. tum sine taetro
terrore atque sonis fulgit nulloque tumultu.
Quod superest, quali natura praedita constant
220 fulmina, declarant ictus et inusta vaporis
signa notaeque gravis halantis sulphuris auras;
ignis enim sunt haec non venti signa neque imbris.
praeterea saepe accendunt quoque tecta domorum
et celeri flamma dominantur in aedibus ipsis.
225 hunc tibi subtilem cum primis ignibus ignem
constituit natura minutis mobilibusque
corporibus, cui nil omnino obsistere possit.
transit enim validum fulmen per saepta domorum
clamor ut ac voces, transit per saxa, per aera
230 et liquidum puncto facit aes in tempore et aurum.
curat item vasis integris vina repente
diffugiant, quia ni mirum facile omnia circum
conlaxat rareque facit lateramina vasis
adveniens calor eius et insinuatus in ipsum
235 mobiliter soluens differt primordia vini.
quod solis vapor aetatem non posse videtur
efficere usque adeo pollens fervore corusco.
tanto mobilior vis et dominantior haec est.
Nunc ea quo pacto gignantur et impete tanto
240 fiant ut possint ictu discludere turris,
disturbare domos, avellere tigna trabesque
et monimenta virum commoliri atque ciere,
exanimare homines, pecudes prosternere passim,
cetera de genere hoc qua vi facere omnia possint,
245 expediam neque te in promissis plura morabor.
Fulmina gignier e crassis alteque putandumst
nubibus extractis; nam caelo nulla sereno
nec leviter densis mittuntur nubibus umquam.
nam dubio procul hoc fieri manifesta docet res;
250 quod tunc per totum concrescunt aeëra nubes,
undique uti tenebras omnis Acherunta reamur
liquisse et magnas caeli complesse cavernas,
Æusque adeo tetra nimborum nocte coorta

inpendent atrae formidinis ora superne,Æ
255 cum commoliri tempestas fulmina coepat.
praeterea persaepe niger quoque per mare nimbus,
ut picis e caelo demissum flumen, in undas
sic cadit effertus tenebris procul et trahit atram
fulminibus gravidam tempestatem atque procellis,
260 ignibus ac ventis cum primis ipse repletus,
in terra quoque ut horrescant ac tecta requirant.
sic igitur supera nostrum caput esse putandumst
tempestatem altam; neque enim caligine tanta
obruerent terras, nisi inaedificata superne
265 multa forent multis exempto nubila sole;
nec tanto possent venientes opprimere imbri,
flumina abundare ut facerent camposque natare,
si non extructis foret alte nubibus aether.
hic igitur ventis atque ignibus omnia plena
270 sunt; ideo passim fremitus et fulgura fiunt.
quippe etenim supra docui permulta vaporis
semina habere cavas nubes et multa necessest
concipere ex solis radiis ardoreque eorum.
hoc ubi ventus eas idem qui cogit in unum
275 forte locum quemvis, expressit multa vaporis
semina seque simul cum eo commiscuit igni,
insinuatus ibi vortex versatur in arto
et calidis acuit fulmen fornacibus intus;
nam duplici ratione accenditur: ipse sua cum
280 mobilitate calescit et e contagibus ignis.
inde ubi percaluit venti vis et gravis ignis
impetus incessit, maturum tum quasi fulmen
perscindit subito nubem ferturque coruscis
omnia luminibus lustrans loca percitus ardor.
285 quem gravis insequitur sonitus, displosa repente
opprimere ut caeli videantur templa superne.
inde tremor terras graviter pertemptat et altum
murmura percurrunt caelum; nam tota fere tum
tempestas concussa tremit fremitusque moventur.
290 quo de concussu sequitur gravis imber et uber,
omnis uti videatur in imbrem vertier aether
atque ita praecipitans ad diluviem revocare;
tantus discidio nubis ventique procella
mittitur, ardenti sonitus cum provolat ictu.
295 Est etiam cum vis extrinsecus incita venti
incidit in validam maturo culmine nubem;
quam cum perscidit, extemplo cadit igneus ille

vertex, quem patrio vocitamus nomine fulmen.
hoc fit idem in partis alias, quo cumque tulit vis.
300 Fit quoque ut inter dum venti vis missa sine igni
igniscat tamen in spatio longoque meatu,
dum venit amittens in cursu corpora quaedam
grandia, quae nequeunt pariter penetrare per auras,
atque alia ex ipso conradens aeëre portat
305 parvola, quae faciunt ignem commixta volando;
non alia longe ratione ac plumbea saepe
fervida fit glans in cursu, cum multa rigoris
corpora dimittens ignem concepit in auris.
Fit quoque ut ipsius plagae vis excitet ignem,
310 frigida cum venti pepulit vis missa sine igni,
ni mirum quia, cum vehementi perculit ictu,
confluere ex ipso possunt elementa vaporis
et simul ex illa quae tum res excipit ictum;
ut, lapidem ferro cum caedimus, evolat ignis,
315 nec, quod frigida vis ferrist, hoc setius illi
semina concurrunt calidi fulgoris ad ictum.
sic igitur quoque res accendi fulmine debet,
opportuna fuit si forte et idonea flammis.
nec temere omnino plane vis frigida venti
320 esse potest, ea quae tanta vi missa supernest,
quin, prius in cursu si non accenditur igni,
at tepefacta tamen veniat commixta calore.
Mobilitas autem fit fulminis et gravis ictus
et celeri ferme percurrunt fulmina lapsu,
325 nubibus ipsa quod omnino prius incita se vis
colligit et magnum conamen sumit eundi,
inde ubi non potuit nubes capere inpetis auctum,
exprimitur vis atque ideo volat impete miro,
ut validis quae de tormentis missa feruntur.
330 Adde quod e parvis et levibus est elementis,
nec facilest tali naturae obsistere quicquam;
inter enim fugit ac penetrat per rara viarum,
non igitur multis offensibus in remorando
haesitat, hanc ob rem celeri volat impete labens.
335 Deinde, quod omnino natura pondera deorsum
omnia nituntur, cum plagast addita vero,
mobilitas duplicatur et impetus ille gravescit,
ut vehementius et citius quae cumque morantur
obvia discutiat plagis itinerque sequatur.
340 Denique quod longo venit impete, sumere debet
mobilitatem etiam atque etiam, quae crescit eundo

et validas auget viris et roborat ictum;
nam facit ut quae sint illius semina cumque
e regione locum quasi in unum cuncta ferantur,
345 omnia coniciens in eum volventia cursum.
Forsitan ex ipso veniens trahat aëre quaedam
corpora, quae plagis incendunt mobilitatem.
incolumisque venit per res atque integra transit
multa, foraminibus liquidus quia transviat ignis.
350 multaque perfringit, cum corpora fulminis ipsa
corporibus rerum inciderunt, qua texta tenentur.
dissoluit porro facile aes aurumque repente
conferve facit, e parvis quia facta minute
corporibus vis est et levibus ex elementis,
355 quae facile insinuantur et insinuata repente
dissoluunt nodos omnis et vincla relaxant.
Autumnoque magis stellis fulgentibus alta
concutitur caeli domus undique totaque tellus,
et cum tempora se veris florentia pandunt.
360 frigore enim desunt ignes ventique calore
deficiunt neque sunt tam denso corpore nubes.
interutrasque igitur cum caeli tempora constant,
tum variae causae concurrunt fulminis omnes.
nam fretus ipse anni permiscet frigus ad aestum.
365 quorum utrumque opus est fabricanda ad fulmina nubi,
ut discordia sit rerum magnoque tumultu
ignibus et ventis furibundus fluctuet aëer.
prima caloris enim pars est postrema rigoris;
tempus id est vernum; quare pugnare necessest
370 dissimilis res inter se turbareque mixtas.
et calor extremus primo cum frigore mixtus
volvitur, autumnus quod fertur nomine tempus,
hic quoque configunt hiemes aestatibus acres.
propterea freta sunt haec anni nominanda,
375 nec mirumst, in eo si tempore plurima fiunt
fulmina tempestasque cietur turbida caelo,
incipiti quoniam bello turbatur utrimque,
hinc flammis, illinc ventis umoreque mixto.
Hoc est igniferi naturam fulminis ipsam
380 perspicere et qua vi faciat rem quamque videre,
non Tyrrhena retro volventem carmina frustra
indicia occultae divum perquirere mentis,
unde volans ignis pervenerit aut in utram se
verterit hinc partim, quo pacto per loca saepta
385 insinuarit, et hinc dominatus ut extulerit se,

quidve nocere queat de caelo fulminis ictus.
quod si Iuppiter atque alii fulgentia divi
terrifico quatiunt sonitu caelestia templa
et iaciunt ignem quo cuiquest cumque voluntas,
390 cur quibus incautum scelus aversabile cumquest
non faciunt icti flammis ut fulguris halent
pectore prefixo, documen mortalibus acre,
et potius nulla sibi turpi conscius in re
volvitur in flammis innoxius inque peditur
395 turbine caelesti subito correptus et igni?
cur etiam loca sola petunt frustra laborant?
an tum brachia consuescunt firmantque lacertos?
in terraque patris cur telum perpetiuntur
optundi? cur ipse sinit neque parcat in hostis?
400 denique cur numquam caelo iacit undique puro
Iuppiter in terras fulmen sonitusque profundit?
an simul ac nubes successere, ipse in eas tum
descendit, prope ut hinc teli determinet ictus?
in mare qua porro mittit ratione? quid undas
405 arguit et liquidam molem camposque natantis?
praeterea si vult caveamus fulminis ictum,
cur dubitat facere ut possimus cernere missum?
si nec opinantis autem volt opprimere igni,
cur tonat ex illa parte, ut vitare queamus,
410 cur tenebras ante et fremitus et murmura concit?
et simul in multas partis qui credere possis
mittere? an hoc ausis numquam contendere factum,
ut fierent ictus uno sub tempore plures?
at saepes numero factum fierique necessest,
415 ut plueret in multis regionibus et cadere imbris,
fulmina sic uno fieri sub tempore multa.
postremo cur sancta deum delubra suasque
discutit infesto praeclaras fulmine sedes
et bene facta deum frangit simulacra suisque
420 demit imaginibus violento vulnere honorem?
atque cur plerumque petit loca plurimaque eius
montibus in summis vestigia cernimus ignis?
Quod super est, facilest ex his cognoscere rebus,
presteras Graii quos ab re nominatarunt,
425 in mare qua missi veniant ratione superne.
nam fit ut inter dum tam quam demissa columna
in mare de caelo descendat, quam freta circum
fervescunt graviter spirantibus incita flabris,
et quae cumque in eo tum sint deprensa tumultu

430 navigia in summum veniant vexata periculum.
hoc fit ubi inter dum non quit vis incita venti
rumpere quam coepit nubem, sed deprimit, ut sit
in mare de caelo tam quam demissa columna,
paulatim, quasi quid pugno bracchique superne
435 coniectu trudatur et extendatur in undas;
quam cum discidit, hinc prorumpitur in mare venti
vis et fervorem mirum concinnat in undis;
versabundus enim turbo descendit et illam
deducit pariter lento cum corpore nubem;
440 quam simul ac gravidam detrusit ad aequora ponti,
ille in aquam subito totum se inmittit et omne
excitat ingenti sonitu mare fervere cogens.
Fit quoque ut involvat venti se nubibus ipse
vertex conradens ex aeëre semina nubis
445 et quasi demissum caelo presteria imitetur;
hic ubi se in terras demisit dissoluitque,
turbinis immanem vim provomit atque procellae.
sed quia fit raro omnino montisque necessest
officere in terris, apparet crebrius idem
450 prospectu maris in magno caeloque patenti.
Nubila conrescunt, ubi corpora multa volando
hoc super in caeli spatio coiere repente
asperiora, modis quae possint indupedita
exiguus tamen inter se compressa teneri.
455 haec faciunt primum parvas consistere nubes;
inde ea comprehendunt inter se conque gregantur
et coniungendo crescunt ventisque feruntur
usque adeo donec tempestas saeva coortast.
Fit quoque uti montis vicina cacumina caelo
460 quam sint quoque magis, tanto magis edita fument
adsidue fulvae nubis caligine crassa
propterea quia, cum consistunt nubila primum,
ante videre oculi quam possint tenvia, venti
portantes cogunt ad summa cacumina montis;
465 hic demum fit uti turba maiore coorta
et condensa queant apparere et simul ipso
vertice de montis videantur surgere in aethram.
nam loca declarat sursum ventosa patere
res ipsa et sensus, montis cum ascendimus altos.
470 Praeterea permulta mari quoque tollere toto
corpora naturam declarant litore vestis
suspensae, cum concipiunt umoris adhaesum.
quo magis ad nubis augendas multa videntur

posse quoque e salso consurgere momine ponti;
475 nam ratio consanguineast umoribus omnis.
Praeterea fluviis ex omnibus et simul ipsa
surgere de terra nebulas aestumque videmus,
quae vel ut halitus hinc ita sursum expressa feruntur
suffunduntque sua caelum caligine et altas
480 sufficiunt nubis paulatim conveniundo;
urget enim quoque signiferi super aetheris aestus
et quasi densendo subtexit caerula nimbis.
Fit quoque ut hunc veniant in caelum extrinsecus illa
corpora quae faciunt nubis nimbosque volantis;
485 innumerabilem enim numerum summamque profundi
esse infinitam docui, quantaque volarent
corpora mobilitate ostendi quamque repente
immemorabile per spatium transire solerent.
haut igitur mirumst, si parvo tempore saepe
490 tam magnis ventis tempestas atque tenebrae
coperiant maria ac terras impensa superne,
undique quandoquidem per caulas aetheris omnis
et quasi per magni circum spiracula mundi
exitus introitusque elementis redditus extat.
495 Nunc age, quo pacto pluvius concreseat in altis
nubibus umor et in terras demissus ut imber
decidat, expediam. primum iam semina aquai
multa simul vincam consurgere nubibus ipsis
omnibus ex rebus pariterque ita crescere utrumque
500 et nubis et aquam, quae cumque in nubibus extat,
ut pariter nobis corpus cum sanguine crescit,
sudor item atque umor qui cumque est denique membris.
concipiunt etiam multum quoque saepe marinum
umorem, vel uti pendentia vellera lanae,
505 cum supera magnum mare venti nubila portant.
consimili ratione ex omnibus amnibus umor
tollitur in nubis. quo cum bene semina aquarum
multa modis multis convenere undique adaucta,
confertae nubes umorem mittere certant
510 dupliciter; nam vis venti contrudit et ipsa
copia nimborum turba maiore coacta
urget et e supero premit ac facit effluere imbris.
praeterea cum rarescunt quoque nubila ventis
aut dissolvuntur solis super icta calore,
515 mittunt umorem pluvium stillantque, quasi igni
cera super calido tabescens multa liquescat.
sed vehemens imber fit, ubi vehementer utraque

nubila vi cumulata premuntur et impete venti.
at retinere diu pluviae longumque morari
520 consuerunt, ubi multa cientur semina aquarum
atque aliis aliae nubes nimbiq̃ue rigantes
insuper atque omni vulgo de parte feruntur,
terraque cum fumans umorem tota redhalat.
hic ubi sol radiis tempestatem inter opacam
525 adversa fulsit nimborum aspargine contra,
tum color in nigris existit nubibus arqui.
Cetera quae sursum crescunt sursumque creantur,
et quae concrescunt in nubibus, omnia, prorsum
omnia, nix venti grando gelidaeque pruinae
530 et vis magna geli, magnum duramen aquarum,
et mora quae fluvios passim refrenat aventis,
perfacilest tamen haec reperire animoque videre,
omnia quo pacto fiant quareve creentur,
cum bene cognoris elementis reddita quae sint.
535 Nunc age, quae ratio terrai motibus extet
percipe. et in primis terram fac ut esse rearis
supter item ut supera ventosis undique plenam
speluncis multosque lacus multasque lucunas
in gremio gerere et rupes deruptaque saxa;
540 multaque sub tergo terrai flumina tecta
volvere vi fluctus summersos caeca putandumst;
undique enim similem esse sui res postulat ipsa.
his igitur rebus subiunctis suppositisque
terra superne tremit magnis concussa ruinis,
545 subter ubi ingentis speluncas subruit aetas;
quippe cadunt toti montes magnoque repente
concussu late disserpunt inde tremores.
et merito, quoniam plaustis concussa tremescunt
tectata viam propter non magno pondere tota,
550 nec minus exultant, si quidvis cumque viai
ferratos utrimque rotarum succutit orbes.
Fit quoque, ubi in magnas aquae vastasque lucunas
gleba vetustate e terra provolvitur ingens,
ut iactetur aquae fluctu quoque terra vacillans;
555 ut vas inter aquas non quit constare, nisi umor
destitit in dubio fluctu iactarier intus.
Praeterea ventus cum per loca subcava terrae
collectus parte ex una procumbit et urget
obnixus magnis speluncas viribus altas,
560 incumbit tellus quo venti prona premit vis.
tum supera terram quae sunt extructa domorum

ad caelumque magis quanto sunt edita quaeque,
inclinata minent in eandem prodita partem
protractaeque trabes inpendent ire paratae.
565 et metuunt magni naturam credere mundi
exitiale aliquod tempus clademque manere,
cum videant tantam terrarum incumbere molem!
quod nisi respirent venti, vis nulla refrenet
res neque ab exitio possit reprehendere euntis;
570 nunc quia respirant alternis inque gravescunt
et quasi collecti redeunt ceduntque repulsi,
saepius hanc ob rem minitatur terra ruinas
quam facit; inclinatur enim retroque recellit
et recipit prolapsa suas in pondere sedes.
575 hac igitur ratione vacillant omnia tecta,
summa magis mediis, media imis, ima perhilum.
Est haec eiusdem quoque magni causa tremoris.
ventus ubi atque animae subito vis maxima quaedam
aut extrinsecus aut ipsa tellure coorta
580 in loca se cava terrarum coniecit ibique
speluncas inter magnas fremit ante tumultu
versabundaQUE portatur, post incita cum vis
exagitata foras erumpitur et simul altam
diffindens terram magnum concinnat hiatum.
585 in Syria Sidone quod accidit et fuit Aegi
in Peloponneso, quas exitus hic animai
disturbat urbes et terrae motus obortus.
multaque praeterea ceciderunt moenia magnis
motibus in terris et multae per mare pessum
590 subsedere suis pariter cum civibus urbes.
quod nisi prorumpit, tamen impetus ipse animai
et fera vis venti per crebra foramina terrae
dispertitur ut horror et incutit inde tremorem;
frigis uti nostros penitus cum venit in artus,
595 concutit invitos cogens tremere atque movere.
ancipiti trepidant igitur terrore per urbis,
tectis superne timent, metuunt inferne cavernas
terrarum ne dissolvat natura repente,
neu distracta suum late dispandat hiatum
600 idque suis confusa velit complere ruinis.
proinde licet quamvis caelum terramque reantur
in corrupta fore aeternae mandata saluti:
et tamen inter dum praesens vis ipsa periculi
subdit et hunc stimulum quadam de parte timoris,
605 ne pedibus raptim tellus subtracta feratur

in barathrum rerumque sequatur prodita summa
funditus et fiat mundi confusa ruina.

* * *

Principio mare mirantur non reddere maius
naturam, quo sit tantus decursus aquarum,
610 omnia quo veniant ex omni flumina parte.
adde vagos imbris tempestatesque volantes,
omnia quae maria ac terras sparguntque rigantque;
adde suos fontis; tamen ad maris omnia summam
guttai vix instar erunt unius adaugmen;
615 quo minus est mirum mare non augescere magnum.
Praeterea magnam sol partem detrahit aestu.
quippe videmus enim vestis umore madentis
exsiccare suis radiis ardentibus solem;
at pelage multa et late substrata videmus.
620 proinde licet quamvis ex uno quoque loco sol
umoris parvam delibet ab aequore partem,
largiter in tanto spatio tamen auferet undis.
Tum porro venti quoque magnam tollere partem
umoris possunt verrentes aequora, ventis
625 una nocte vias quoniam persaepe videmus
siccari mollisque luti concreescere crustas.
Praeterea docui multum quoque tollere nubes
umorem magno conceptum ex aequore ponti
et passim toto terrarum spargere in orbi,
630 cum pluit in terris et venti nubila portant.
Postremo quoniam raro cum corpore tellus
est et coniunctast oras maris undique cingens,
debet, ut in mare de terris venit umor aquai,
in terras itidem manare ex aequore salso;
635 percolatur enim virus retroque remanat
materies umoris et ad caput amnibus omnis
confluit, inde super terras redit agmine dulci
qua via secta semel liquido pede detulit undas.
Nunc ratio quae sit, per fauces montis ut Aetnae
640 expirent ignes inter dum turbine tanto,
expediam; neque enim mediocri clade coorta
flammae tempestas Siculum dominata per agros
finitimis ad se convertit gentibus ora,
fumida cum caeli scintillare omnia templa
645 cernentes pavida complebant pectora cura,
quid moliretur rerum natura novarum.
Hisce tibi in rebus latest alteque videndum

et longe cunctas in partis dispiciendum,
ut reminiscaris summam rerum esse profundam
650 et videas caelum summai totius unum
quam sit parvula pars et quam multesima constet
nec tota pars, homo terrai quota totius unus.
quod bene propositum si plane contueare
ac videas plane, mirari multa relinquo.
655 numquis enim nostrum miratur, siquis in artus
accepit calido febrim fervore coortam
aut alium quemvis morbi per membra dolorem?
opturgescit enim subito pes, arripit acer
saepe dolor dentes, oculos invadit in ipsos,
660 existit sacer ignis et urit corpore serpens
quam cumque arripuit partem repitque per artus,
ni mirum quia sunt multarum semina rerum
et satis haec tellus morbi caelumque mali fert,
unde queat vis immensi procreare morbi.
665 sic igitur toti caelo terraeque putandumst
ex infinito satis omnia suppeditare,
unde repente queat tellus concussa moveri
perque mare ac terras rapidus percurrere turbo,
ignis abundare Aetnaeus, flammescere caelum;
670 id quoque enim fit et ardescunt caelestia templa
et tempestates pluviae graviore coortu
sunt, ubi forte ita se tetulerunt semina aquarum.
'at nimis est ingens incendi turbidus ardor.'
scilicet et fluviis qui visus maximus ei,
675 qui non ante aliquem maiorem vidit, et ingens
arbor homoque videtur et omnia de genere omni
maxima quae vidit quisque, haec ingentia fingit,
cum tamen omnia cum caelo terraque marique
nil sint ad summam summai totius omnem.
680 Nunc tamen illa modis quibus inritata repente
flamma foras vastis Aetnae fornacibus efflet,
expediam. primum totius subcava montis
est natura fere silicum suffulta cavernis.
omnibus est porro in speluncis ventus et aëer.
685 ventus enim fit, ubi est agitando percitus aëer.
hic ubi percaluit cale fecitque omnia circum
saxa furens, qua contingit, terramque et ab ollis
excussit calidum flammis velocibus ignem,
tollit se ac rectis ita faucibus eicit alte.
690 fert itaque ardorem longe longeque favillam
differt et crassa volvit caligine fumum

extruditque simul mirando pondere saxa;
ne dubites quin haec animai turbida sit vis.
praeterea magna ex parti mare montis ad eius
695 radices frangit fluctus aestumque resolvit.
ex hoc usque mari speluncae montis ad altas
perveniunt subter fauces. hac ire fatendumst

* * *

et penetrare mari penitus res cogit aperto
atque efflare foras ideoque extollere flammam
700 saxaque subiectare et arenae tollere nimbos.
in summo sunt vertice enim crateres, ut ipsi
nominitant, nos quod fauces perhibemus et ora.
Sunt aliquot quoque res quarum unam dicere causam
non satis est, verum pluris, unde una tamen sit;
705 corpus ut exanimum siquod procul ipse iacere
conspicias hominis, fit ut omnis dicere causas
conveniat leti, dicatur ut illius una;
nam neque eum ferro nec frigore vincere possis
interiisse neque a morbo neque forte veneno,
710 verum aliquid genere esse ex hoc quod contigit ei
scimus. item in multis hoc rebus dicere habemus.
Nilus in aestatem crescit campisque redundat
unicus in terris, Aegypti totius amnis.
is rigat Aegyptum medium per saepe calorem,
715 aut quia sunt aestate aquilones ostia contra,
anni tempore eo, qui etesiae esse feruntur,
et contra fluvium flantes remorantur et undas
cogentes sursus replent coguntque manere.
nam dubio procul haec adverso flabra feruntur
720 flumine, quae gelidis ab stellis axis aguntur;
ille ex aestifera parti venit amnis ab austro
inter nigra virum percocto saecula colore
exoriens penitus media ab regione diei.
est quoque uti possit magnus congestus harenae
725 fluctibus adversis oppilare ostia contra,
cum mare permotum ventis ruit intus harenam;
quo fit uti pacto liber minus exitus amnis
et proclivis item fiat minus impetus undis.
fit quoque uti pluviae forsan magis ad caput ei
730 tempore eo fiant, quo etesia flabra aquilonum
nubila coniciunt in eas tunc omnia partis.
scilicet, ad mediam regionem eiecta diei
cum convenerunt, ibi ad altos denique montis

contrusae nubes coguntur vique premuntur.

735 forsitan Aethiopum penitus de montibus altis
crescat, ubi in campos albas descendere ningues
tabificis subigit radiis sol omnia lustrans.

Nunc age, Averno tibi quae sint loca cumque lacusque,
expediam, quali natura praedita constant.

740 principio, quod Averno vocantur nomine, id ab re
inpositumst, quia sunt avibus contraria cunctis,
e regione ea quod loca cum venere volantes,
remigii oblatae pennarum vela remittunt
praecipitesque cadunt molli cervice profusae
745 in terram, si forte ita fert natura locorum,
aut in aquam, si forte lacus substratus Avernī.
is locus est Cumas apud, acri sulphure montis
oppleti calidis ubi fumant fontibus aucti.

est et Athenaeis in moenibus, arcis in ipso
750 vertice, Palladis ad templum Tritonidis almae,
quo numquam pennis appellunt corpora raucae
cornices, non cum fumant altaria donis;
usque adeo fugitant non iras Palladis acris
pervigili causa, Graium ut cecinere poëtae,
755 sed natura loci opus efficit ipsa suapte.
in Syria quoque fertur item locus esse videri,
quadripedes quoque quo simul ac vestigia primum
intulerint, graviter vis cogat concidere ipsa,
manibus ut si sint divis mactata repente.

760 omnia quae naturali ratione geruntur,
et quibus e fiant causis apparet origo;
ianua ne pote eis Orci regionibus esse
credatur, post hinc animas Acheruntis in oras
ducere forte deos manīs inferne reamur,
765 naribus alipedes ut cervi saepe putantur
ducere de latebris serpentia saecula ferarum.
quod procul a vera quam sit ratione repulsum
percipe; nam de re nunc ipsa dicere conor.

Principio hoc dico, quod dixi saepe quoque ante,
770 in terra cuiusque modi rerum esse figuras;
multa, cibo quae sunt, vitalia multaque, morbos
incutere et mortem quae possint adcelerare.
et magis esse aliis alias animantibus aptas
res ad vitae rationem ostendimus ante

775 propter dissimilem naturam dissimilisque
texturas inter sese primasque figuras.
multa meant inimica per auris, multa per ipsas

insinuant naris infesta atque aspera tactu,
nec sunt multa parum tactu vitanda neque autem
780 aspectu fugienda saporeque tristia quae sint.
Deinde videre licet quam multae sint homini res
acriter infesto sensu spurcaeque gravisque;
arboribus primum certis gravis umbra tributa
usque adeo, capitis faciant ut saepe dolores,
785 siquis eas subter iacuit prostratus in herbis.
est etiam magnis Heliconis montibus arbos
floris odore hominem taetro consueta necare.
scilicet haec ideo terris ex omnia surgunt,
multa modis multis multarum semina rerum
790 quod permixta gerit tellus discretaque tradit.
nocturnumque recens extinctum lumen ubi acri
nidore offendit nares, consopit ibidem,
concidere et spumas qui morbo mittere suevit.
castoreoque gravi mulier sopita recumbit,
795 et manibus nitidum teneris opus effluit ei,
tempore eo si odoratast quo menstrua solvit.
multaque praeterea languentia membra per artus
solvunt atque animam labefactant sedibus intus.
denique si calidis etiam cunctere lavabris
800 plenior et lueris, solio ferventis aquai
quam facile in medio fit uti des saepe ruinas!
carbonumque gravis vis atque odor insinuatur
quam facile in cerebrum, nisi aqua praecepimus ante!
at cum membra domans percepit fervida febris,
805 tum fit odor vini plagae mactabilis instar.
nonne vides etiam terra quoque sulphur in ipsa
gignier et taetro concrescere odore bitumen,
denique ubi argenti venas aurique secuntur,
terrai penitus scrutantes abdita ferro,
810 qualis expiret Scaptensula subter odores?
quidve mali fit ut exalent aurata metalla!
quas hominum reddunt facies qualisque colores!
nonne vides audisve perire in tempore parvo
quam soleant et quam vitae copia desit,
815 quos opere in tali cohibet vis magna necessis?
hos igitur tellus omnis exaestuat aestus
expiratque foras in apertum promptaque caeli.
Sic et Averno loca alitibus summittere debent
mortiferam vim. de terra quae surgit in auras,
820 ut spatium caeli quadam de parte venenet;
quo simul ac primum pennis delata sit ales,

impediatur ibi caeco correpta veneno,
ut cadat e regione loci, qua derigit aestus.
quo cum conruit, hic eadem vis illius aestus
825 reliquias vitae membris ex omnibus aufert.
quippe etenim primo quasi quendam conciet aestum;
posterius fit uti. cum iam cecidere veneni
in fontis ipsos, ibi sit quoque vita vomenda,
propterea quod magna mali fit copia circum.
830 Fit quoque ut inter dum vis haec atque aestus Avernī
aëra, qui inter avis cumquest terramque locatus.
discutiat, prope uti locus hic linquatur inanis.
cuius ubi e regione loci venere volantis,
claudicat extemplo pinnarum nisus inanis
835 et conamen utrimque alarum proditur omne.
hic ubi nixari nequeunt insistereque alis,
scilicet in terram delabi pondere cogit
natura, et vacuum prope iam per inane iacentes
dispergunt animas per caulas corporis omnis.

* * *

840 frigidior porro in puteis aestate fit umor,
arescit quia terra calore et semina si qua
forte vaporis habet proprie, dimittit in auras.
quo magis est igitur tellus effeta calore,
fit quoque frigidior qui in terrast abditus umor.
845 frigore cum premitur porro omnis terra coitque
et quasi concrescit, fit scilicet ut coeundo
exprimat in puteos si quem gerit ipsa calorem.
Esse apud Hammonis fanum fons luce diurna
frigidus et calidus nocturno tempore fertur.
850 hunc homines fontem nimis admirantur et acri
sole putant subter terras fervere partim,
nox ubi terribili terras caligine texit.
quod nimis a verast longe ratione remotum.
quippe ubi sol nudum contractans corpus aquai
855 non quierit calidum supera de reddere parte,
cum superum lumen tanto fervore fruatur,
qui queat hic supter tam crasso corpore terram
perquoquere umorem et calido focilare vapore?
praesertim cum vix possit per saepta domorum
860 insinuare suum radiis ardentibus aestum.
quae ratio est igitur? ni mirum terra magis quod
rara tenet circum fontem quam cetera tellus
multaque sunt ignis prope semina corpus aquai.

hoc ubi roriferis terram nox obruit undis,
865 extemplo penitus frigescit terra coitque.
hac ratione fit ut, tam quam compressa manu sit,
exprimat in fontem quae semina cumque habet ignis,
quae calidum faciunt laticis tactum atque vaporem.
inde ubi sol radiis terram dimovet obortus
870 et rare fecit calido miscente vapore,
rursus in antiquas redeunt primordia sedes
ignis et in terram cedit calor omnis aquai.
frigidus hanc ob rem fit fons in luce diurna.
praeterea solis radiis iactatur aquai
875 umor et in lucem tremulo rarescit ab aestu;
propterea fit uti quae semina cumque habet ignis
dimittat; quasi saepe gelum, quod continet in se,
mittit et exsolvit glaciem nodosque relaxat.
Frigidus est etiam fons, supra quem sita saepe
880 stuppa iacit flammam concepto protinus igni,
taedaeque consimili ratione accensa per undas
conlucet, quo cumque natans impellitur auris.
nihil mirum quia sunt in aqua permulta vaporis
semina de terraque necessest funditus ipsa
885 ignis corpora per totum consurgere fontem
et simul exspirare foras exireque in auras,
non ita multa tamen, calidus queat ut fieri fons;
praeterea dispersa foras erumpere cogit
vis per aquam subito sursumque ea conciliari.
890 quod genus endo maris Aradi fons, dulcis aquai
qui scatit et salsas circum se dimovet undas;
et multis aliis praebet regionibus aequor
utilitatem opportunam sitientibus nautis,
quod dulcis inter salsas intervomit undas.
895 sic igitur per eum possunt erumpere fontem
et scatere illa foras; in stuppam semina quae cum
conveniunt aut in taedae corpore adhaerent,
ardescunt facile extemplo, quia multa quoque in se
semina habent ignis stuppae taedaeque tenentes.
900 nonne vides etiam, nocturna ad lumina linum
nuper ubi extinctum admoveas, accendit ante
quam tetigit flammam, taedamque pari ratione?
multaque praeterea prius ipso tacta vapore
eminus ardescunt quam comminus imbuat ignis.
905 hoc igitur fieri quoque in illo fonte putandum est.
Quod super est, agere incipiam quo foedere fiat
naturae, lapis hic ut ferrum ducere possit,

quem Magneta vocant patrio de nomine Grai,
Magnetum quia sit patriis in finibus ortus.
910 hunc homines lapidem mirantur; quippe catenam
saepe ex anellis reddit pendentibus ex se.
quinque etenim licet inter dum pluresque videre
ordine demisso levibus iactarier auris,
unus ubi ex uno dependet supter adhaerens
915 ex alioque alius lapidis vim vinclaque noscit;
usque adeo permanenter vis pervaleat eius.
Hoc genus in rebus firmandumst multa prius quam
ipsius rei rationem reddere possis,
et nimium longis ambagibus est adeundum;
920 quo magis attentas auris animumque reposco.
Principio omnibus ab rebus, quas cumque videmus,
perpetuo fluere ac mitti spargique necessest
corpora quae feriant oculos visumque lacesant.
perpetuoque fluunt certis ab rebus odores;
925 frigus ut a fluviis, calor a sole, aestus ab undis
aequoris, exesor moerorum, litora propter;
nec varii cessant sonitus manare per auras;
denique in os salsi venit umor saepe saporis,
cum mare versamur propter, dilutaque contra
930 cum tuimur misceri absinthia, tangit amaror.
usque adeo omnibus ab rebus res quaeque fluenter
fertur et in cunctas dimittitur undique partis
nec mora nec requies interdatur ulla fluendi,
perpetuo quoniam sentimus et omnia semper
935 cernere odorari licet et sentire sonare.
Nunc omnis repetam quam raro corpore sint res
commemorare; quod in primo quoque carmine claret.
quippe etenim, quamquam multas hoc pertinet ad res
noscere, cum primis hanc ad rem protinus ipsam,
940 qua de disserere adgredior, firmare necessest
nil esse in promptu nisi mixtum corpus inani.
principio fit ut in speluncis saxa superna
sudent umore et guttis manantibus stillent.
manat item nobis e toto corpore sudor,
945 crescit barba pilique per omnia membra, per artus.
diditur in venas cibus omnis, auget alitque
corporis extremas quoque partis unguiculosque.
frigus item transire per aes calidumque vaporem
sentimus, sentimus item transire per aurum
950 atque per argentum, cum pocula plena tenemus.
denique per dissaepa domorum saxea voces

pervolitant, permanat odor frigusque vaposque
ignis, qui ferri quoque vim penetrare sueëvit,
denique qua circum caeli lorica coeërcet,
955 morbida visque simul, cum extrinsecus insinuatur;
et tempestate in terra caeloque coorta
in caelum terrasque remotae iure facessunt;
quandoquidem nihil est nisi raro corpore nexum.
Huc accedit uti non omnia, quae iaciuntur
960 corpora cumque ab rebus, eodem praedita sensu
atque eodem pacto rebus sint omnibus apta.
principio terram sol excoquit et facit are,
at glaciem dissolvit et altis montibus altas
extractasque nives radiis tabescere cogit;
965 denique cera lique fit in eius posta vapore.
ignis item liquidum facit aes aurumque resolvit,
at coria et carnem trahit et conducit in unum.
umor aquae porro ferrum condurat ab igni,
at coria et carnem molliat durata calore.
970 barbigeras oleaster eo iuvat usque capellas,
effluat ambrosias quasi vero et nectare tinctus;
qua nihil est homini quod amarius fronde acida extet.
denique amaracinum fugitat sus et timet omne
unguentum; nam saetigeris subus acre venenumst;
975 quod nos inter dum tam quam recreare videtur.
at contra nobis caenum taeterrima cum sit
spurcities, eadem subus haec iucunda videtur,
insatiabiliter toti ut volvantur ibidem.
Hoc etiam super est, ipsa quam dicere de re
980 adgredior, quod dicendum prius esse videtur.
multa foramina cum variis sint reddita rebus,
dissimili inter se natura praedita debent
esse et habere suam naturam quaeque viasque.
quippe etenim varii sensus animantibus insunt,
985 quorum quisque suam proprie rem percipit in se;
nam penetrare alio sonitus alioque saporem
cernimus e sucis, alio nidoris odores.
scilicet id fieri cogit natura viarum
multimodis varians, ut paulo ostendimus ante.
990 praeterea manare aliud per saxa videtur,
atque aliud lignis, aliud transire per aurum,
argentoque foras aliud vitroque meare;
nam fluere hac species, illac calor ire videtur,
atque aliis aliud citius transmittere eadem.
995 scilicet id fieri cogit natura viarum

multimodis varians, ut paulo ostendimus ante,
propter dissimilem naturam textaque rerum.
Qua propter, bene ubi haec confirmata atque locata
omnia constiterint nobis praeposta parata,
1000 quod super est, facile hinc ratio reddetur et omnis
causa pate fiet, quae ferri pelliciat vim.
Principio fluere e lapide hoc permulta necessest
semina sive aestum, qui discutit aeëra plagis,
inter qui lapidem ferrumque est cumque locatus.
1005 hoc ubi inanitur spatium multusque vace fit
in medio locus, extemplo primordia ferri
in vacuum prolapsa cadunt coniuncta, fit utque
anulus ipse sequatur eatque ita corpore toto.
nec res ulla magis primoribus ex elementis
1010 indupedita suis arte conexa cohaeret
quam validi ferri natura et frigidus horror.
quo minus est mirum, quod dicitur esse alienum,
corpora si nequeunt e ferro plura coorta
in vacuum ferri, quin anulus ipse sequatur;
1015 quod facit et sequitur, donec pervenit ad ipsum
iam lapidem caecisque in eo compagibus haesit.
hoc fit idem cunctas in partis; unde vace fit
cumque locus, sive e transverso sive superne,
corpora continuo in vacuum vicina feruntur;
1020 quippe agitantur enim plagis aliunde nec ipsa
sponte sua sursum possunt consurgere in auras.
huc accedit item, quare queat id magis esse,
haec quoque res adiumento motuque iuvatur,
quod, simul a fronte est anelli rarior aeër
1025 factus inanusque locus magis ac vacuatus,
continuo fit uti qui post est cumque locatus
aeër a tergo quasi provehat atque propellat.
semper enim circum positus res verberat aeër;
sed tali fit uti propellat tempore ferrum,
1030 parte quod ex una spatium vacat et capit in se.
hic, tibi quem memoro, per crebra foramina ferri
parvas ad partis subtiliter insinuatus
trudit et inpellit, quasi navem velaque ventus.
denique res omnes debent in corpore habere
1035 aeëra, quandoquidem raro sunt corpore et aeër
omnibus est rebus circum datus adpositusque.
hic igitur, penitus qui in ferrost abditus aeër,
sollicito motu semper iactatur eoque
verberat anellum dubio procul et ciet intus,

1040 scilicet illo eodem fertur, quo praecipitavit
iam semel et partem in vacuam conamina sumpsit.
Fit quoque ut a lapide hoc ferri natura recedat
inter dum, fugere atque sequi consueta vicissim.
exultare etiam Samothracia ferrea vidi
1045 et ramenta simul ferri furere intus ahenis
in scaphiis, lapis hic Magnes cum subditus esset;
usque adeo fugere a saxo gestire videtur.
aere interposito discordia tanta creatur
propterea quia ni mirum prius aestus ubi aeris
1050 praecepit ferrique vias possedit apertas,
posterior lapidis venit aestus et omnia plena
invenit in ferro neque habet qua tranet ut ante;
cogitur offensare igitur pulsareque fluctu
ferrea texta suo; quo pacto respuit ab se
1055 atque per aes agitat, sine eo quod saepe resorbet.
Illud in his rebus mirari mitte, quod aestus
non valet e lapide hoc alias impellere item res.
pondere enim fretae partim stant, quod genus aurum;
at partim raro quia sunt cum corpore, ut aestus
1060 pervolet intactus, nequeunt inpellier usquam,
ligna materies in quo genere esse videtur.
interutrasque igitur ferri natura locata
aeris ubi accepit quaedam corpuscula, tum fit,
inpellant ut eo Magnesia flumine saxa.
1065 nec tamen haec ita sunt aliarum rerum aliena,
ut mihi multa parum genere ex hoc suppeditentur,
quae memorare queam inter se singlariter apta.
saxa vides primum sola colescere calce.
glutine materies taurino iungitur una,
1070 ut vitio venae tabularum saepius hiscant
quam laxare queant compages taurea vincla.
vitigeni latices aquai fontibus audent
misceri, cum pix nequeat gravis et leve olivom.
purpureusque colos conchyli iungitur uno
1075 corpore cum lanae, dirimi qui non queat usquam,
non si Neptuni fluctu renovare operam des,
non mare si totum velit eluere omnibus undis.
denique res auro non aurum copulat una,
aerique aes plumbo fit uti iungatur ab albo?
1080 cetera iam quam multa licet reperire! quid ergo?
nec tibi tam longis opus est ambagibus usquam
nec me tam multam hic operam consumere par est,
sed breviter paucis praestat comprehendere multa.

quorum ita texturae ceciderunt mutua contra,
1085 ut cava convenient plenae haec illius illa
huiusque inter se, iunctura haec optima constat.
est etiam, quasi ut anellis hamisque plicata
inter se quaedam possint coplata teneri;
quod magis in lapide hoc fieri ferroque videtur.
1090 Nunc ratio quae sit morbis aut unde repente
mortiferam possit cladem conflare coorta
morbida vis hominum generi pecudumque catervis,
expediam, primum multarum semina rerum
esse supra docui quae sint vitalia nobis,
1095 et contra quae sint morbo mortique necessest
multa volare; ea cum casu sunt forte coorta
et perturbantur caelum, fit morbidus aëther.
atque ea vis omnis morborum pestilientiaque
aut extrinsecus ut nubes nebulaeque superne
1100 per caelum veniunt aut ipsa saepe coorta
de terra surgunt, ubi putorem umida nactast
intempestivis pluviisque et solibus icta.
nonne vides etiam caeli novitate et aquarum
temptari procul a patria qui cumque domoque
1105 adveniunt ideo quia longe discrepant res?
nam quid Britannis caelum differre putamus,
et quod in Aegypto est, qua mundi claudicat axis,
quidve quod in Ponto est differre et Gadibus atque
usque ad nigra virum percocto saecula colore?
1110 quae cum quattuor inter se diversa videmus
quattuor a ventis et caeli partibus esse,
tum color et facies hominum distare videntur
largiter et morbi generatim saecula tenere.
est elephas morbus qui propter flumina Nili
1115 gignitur Aegypto in media neque praeterea usquam.
Atthide temptantur gressus oculique in Achaeis
finibus. inde aliis alius locus est inimicus
partibus ac membris; varius concinnat id aëther.
proinde ubi se caelum, quod nobis forte alienum,
1120 commovet atque aëther inimicus serpere coepit,
ut nebula ac nubes paulatim repit et omne
qua graditur conturbat et immutare coactat,
fit quoque ut, in nostrum cum venit denique caelum,
corrumpat reddatque sui simile atque alienum.
1125 haec igitur subito clades nova pestilientiaque
aut in aquas cadit aut fruges persidit in ipsas
aut alios hominum pastus pecudumque cibatus,

aut etiam suspensa manet vis acëre in ipso
et, cum spirantes mixtas hinc ducimus auras,
1130 illa quoque in corpus pariter sorbere necessest.
consimili ratione venit bubus quoque saepe
pestilitas et iam pigris balantibus aegror.
nec refert utrum nos in loca deveniamus
nobis adversa et caeli mutemus amictum,
1135 an caelum nobis ultro natura corumptum
deferat aut aliquid quo non consuevimus uti,
quod nos adventu possit temptare recenti.
Haec ratio quondam morborum et mortifer aestus
finibus in Cecropis funestos reddidit agros
1140 vastavitque vias, exhaustit civibus urbem.
nam penitus veniens Aegypti finibus ortus,
aeëra permensus multum camposque natantis,
incubuit tandem populo Pandionis omni.
inde catervatim morbo mortique dabantur.
1145 principio caput incensum fervore gerebant
et duplicis oculos suffusa luce rubentes.
sudabant etiam fauces intrinsecus atrae
sanguine et ulceribus vocis via saepta coibat
atque animi interpret manabat lingua cruore
1150 debilitata malis, motu gravis, aspera tactu.
inde ubi per fauces pectus complerat et ipsum
morbida vis in cor maestum confluxerat aegris,
omnia tum vero vitae claustra lababant.
spiritus ore foras taetrumolvebat odorem,
1155 rancida quo perolent proiecta cadavera ritu.
atque animi prorsum tum vires totius, omne
languibat corpus leti iam limine in ipso.
intolerabilibusque malis erat anxius angor
adsidue comes et gemitu commixta querella,
1160 singultusque frequens noctem per saepe diemque
corripere adsidue nervos et membra coactans
dissolvebat eos, defessos ante, fatigans.
nec nimio cuiquam posses ardore tueri
corporis in summo summam fervere partem,
1165 sed potius tepidum manibus proponere tactum
et simul ulceribus quasi inustis omne rubere
corpus, ut est per membra sacer dum diditur ignis.
intima pars hominum vero flagrabat ad ossa,
flagrabat stomacho flamma ut fornacibus intus.
1170 nil adeo posses cuiquam leve tenveque membris
vertere in utilitatem, at ventum et frigora semper.

in fluvios partim gelidos ardentia morbo
membra dabant nudum iacentes corpus in undas.
multi praecipites nymphis putealibus alte
1175 inciderunt ipso venientes ore patente:
insedabiliter sitis arida corpora mersans
aequabat multum parvis umoribus imbrem.
nec requies erat ulla mali: defessa iacebant
corpora. mussabat tacito medicina timore,
1180 quippe patentia cum totiens ardentia morbis
lumina versarent oculorum expertia somno.
multaque praeterea mortis tum signa dabantur:
perturbata animi mens in maerore metuque,
triste supercilium, furiosus voltus et acer,
1185 sollicitae porro plенаeque sonoribus aures,
creber spiritus aut ingens raroque coortus,
sudorisque madens per collum splendidus umor,
tenvia sputa minuta, croci contacta colore
salsaque per fauces rauca vix edita tussi.
1190 in manibus vero nervi trahere et tremere artus
a pedibusque minutatim succedere frigus
non dubitabat. item ad supremum denique tempus
compressae nares, nasi primoris acumen
tenve, cavati oculi, cava tempora, frigida pellis
1195 duraque in ore, iacens rictu, frons tenta manebat.
nec nimio rigida post artus morte iacebant.
octavoque fere candenti lumine solis
aut etiam nona reddebant lampade vitam.
quorum siquis, ut est, vitarat funera leti,
1200 ulceribus taetris et nigra proluvie alvi
posterius tamen hunc tabes letumque manebat,
aut etiam multus capitis cum saepe dolore
corruptus sanguis expletis naribus ibat.
huc hominis totae vires corpusque fluebat.
1205 profluvium porro qui taetri sanguinis acre
exierat, tamen in nervos huic morbus et artus
ibat et in partis genitalis corporis ipsas.
et graviter partim metuentes limina leti
vivebant ferro privati parte virili,
1210 et manibus sine non nulli pedibusque manebant
in vita tamen et perdebant lumina partim.
usque adeo mortis metus iis incesserat acer.
atque etiam quosdam cepere obliviae rerum
cunctarum, neque se possent cognoscere ut ipsi.
1215 multaque humi cum inhumata iacerent corpora supra

corporibus, tamen alituum genus atque ferarum
aut procul absiliebat, ut acrem exiret odorem,
aut, ubi gustarat, languebat morte propinqua.
nec tamen omnino temere illis solibus ulla
1220 comparebat avis, nec tristia saecula ferarum
exibant silvis. languebant pleraque morbo
et moriebantur. cum primis fida canum vis
strata viis animam ponebat in omnibus aegre;
extorquebat enim vitam vis morbida membris.
1225 incommitata rapi certabant funera vasta
nec ratio remedii communis certa dabatur;
nam quod ali dederat vitalis aëris auras
volvere in ore licere et caeli templa tueri,
hoc aliis erat exitio letumque parabat.
1230 Illud in his rebus miserandum magnopere unum
aerumnabile erat, quod ubi se quisque videbat
implicitum morbo, morti damnatus ut esset,
deficiens animo maestus cum corde iacebat,
funera respectans animam amittebat ibidem.
1235 quippe etenim nullo cessabant tempore apisci
ex aliis alios avidi contagia morbi,
lanigeras tam quam pecudes et bucera saecula,
idque vel in primis cumulabat funere funus
nam qui cumque suos fugitabant visere ad aegros,
1240 vitae nimium cupidos mortisque timentis
poenibat paulo post turpi morte malaque,
desertos, opis expertis, incuria mactans.
qui fuerant autem praesto, contagibus ibant
atque labore, pudor quem tum cogebat obire
1245 blandaque lassorum vox mixta voce querellae.
optimus hoc leti genus ergo quisque subibat.
Praeterea iam pastor et armentarius omnis
et robustus item curvi moderator aratri
languebat, penitusque casa contrusa iacebant
1250 corpora paupertate et morbo dedita morti.
exanimis pueris super exanimata parentum
corpora non numquam posses retroque videre
matribus et patribus natos super edere vitam.
nec minimam partem ex agris maeror is in urbem
1255 confluit, languens quem contulit agricolarum
copia conveniens ex omni morbida parte.
omnia conplebant loca tecta quo magis aestu,
confertos ita acervatim mors accumulabat.
multa siti prostrata viam per proque voluta

1260 corpora silanos ad aquarum strata iacebant
interclusa anima nimia ab dulcedine aquarum,
multaque per populi passim loca prompta viasque
languida semanimo cum corpore membra videres
horrida paedore et pannis cooperta perire,
1265 corporis inluvie, pelli super ossibus una,
ulceribus taetris prope iam sordeque sepulta.
omnia denique sancta deum delubra replebat
corporibus mors exanimis onerataque passim
cuncta cadaveribus caelestum templa manebant,
1270 hospitibus loca quae complerant aedituentes.
nec iam religio divom nec numina magni
pendebantur enim: praesens dolor exsuperabat.
nec mos ille sepulturae remanebat in urbe,
quo prius hic populus semper consuerat humari;
1275 perturbatus enim totus trepidabat et unus
quisque suum pro re cognatum maestus humabat.
multaque res subita et paupertas horrida suasit;
namque suos consanguineos aliena rogorum
insuper exstructa ingenti clamore locabant
1280 subdebantque faces, multo cum sanguine saepe
rixantes, potius quam corpora desererentur,
inque aliis alium populum sepelire suorum
certantes; lacrimis lassi luctuque redibant;
inde bonam partem in lectum maerore dabantur;
1285 nec poterat quisquam reperiri, quem neque morbus
nec mors nec luctus temptaret tempore tali.

The Dual Text



'The Acropolis of Athens' by Leo von Klenze, 1846 — Book VI of 'De rerum natura' features a vivid description of the great pestilence that devastated Athens during the Peloponnesian War.

DUAL LATIN AND ENGLISH TEXT



Translated by H. A. J. Munro

In this section, readers can view a section by section text of Lucretius' epic poem *De rerum natura*, alternating between the original Latin and Munro's prose translation.

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Liber Primus — BOOK I.

Aeneadum genetrix, hominum divomque voluptas,
alma Venus, caeli subter labentia signa
quae mare navigerum, quae terras frugiferentis
concelebras, per te quoniam genus omne animantum
5 concipitur visitque exortum lumina solis:
te, dea, te fugiunt venti, te nubila caeli
adventumque tuum, tibi suavis daedala tellus
summittit flores, tibi rident aequora ponti
placatumque nitet diffuso lumine caelum.
10 nam simul ac species patefactast verna diei
et reserata viget genitabilis aura favoni,
aeriae primum volucris te, diva, tuumque
significant initum percussae corda tua vi.
inde ferae pecudes persultant pabula laeta
15 et rapidos tranant amnis: ita capta lepore
te sequitur cupide quo quamque inducere pergis.
denique per maria ac montis fluviosque rapacis
frondiferasque domos avium camposque virentis
omnibus incutiens blandum per pectora amorem
20 efficis ut cupide generatim saecula propagent.
quae quoniam rerum naturam sola gubernas
nec sine te quicquam dias in luminis oras
exoritur neque fit laetum neque amabile quicquam,
te sociam studeo scribendis versibus esse,
25 quos ego de rerum natura pangere conor
Memmiadae nostro, quem tu, dea, tempore in omni
omnibus ornatum voluisti excellere rebus.
quo magis aeternum da dictis, diva, leporem.
effice ut interea fera moenera militiai
30 per maria ac terras omnis sopita quiescant;

[1] MOTHER of the Aeneadae, darling of men and gods, increase-giving Venus, who beneath the gliding signs of heaven fillest with thy presence the ship-carrying sea, the corn-bearing lands, since through thee every kind of living things is conceived, rises up and beholds the light of the sun.

Before thee, goddess, flee the winds, the clouds of heaven, before thee and thy advent; for thee earth, manifold in works, puts forth sweet-smelling flowers; for thee the levels of the sea do laugh and heaven propitiated shines with outspread light.

For soon as the vernal aspect of day is disclosed, and the birth-favoring breeze of Favonius unbarred is blowing fresh, first the fowls of the air, O lady,

show signs of thee and thy entering in, thoroughly smitten in heart by thy power.

Next the wild herds bound over the glad pastures and swim the rapid rivers: in such wise each made prisoner by thy charms follows thee with desire, whither thou goest to lead it on.

Yes, throughout seas and mountains and sweeping rivers and leafy homes of birds and grassy plains, striking fond love into the breasts of all thou constrainest them each after its kind to continue their races with desire.

Since thou then art sole mistress of the nature of things and without thee nothing rises up into the divine borders of light, nothing grows to be glad or lovely, fain would I have thee for a helpmate in writing the verses which I essay to pen on the nature of things for our own son of the Memmii, whom thou, goddess, hast willed to have no peer, rich as he ever is in every grace.

Wherefore all the more, O lady, lend my lays an everliving charm.

Cause meanwhile the savage works of war to be lulled to rest throughout all seas and lands;

nam tu sola potes tranquilla pace iuvare
mortalis, quoniam belli fera moenera Mavors
armipotens regit, in gremium qui saepe tuum se
reiciit aeterno devictus vulnere amoris,
35 atque ita suspiciens tereti cervice reposta
pascit amore avidos inhians in te, dea, visus
eque tuo pendet resupini spiritus ore.
hunc tu, diva, tuo recubantem corpore sancto
circum fusa super, suavis ex ore loquellas
40 funde petens placidam Romanis, incluta, pacem;
nam neque nos agere hoc patriai tempore iniquo
possumus aequo animo nec Memmi clara propago
talibus in rebus communi desse saluti.

omnis enim per se divum natura necessest
45 immortalis aevo summa cum pace fruatur
semota ab nostris rebus seiunctaque longe;
nam privata dolore omni, privata periculis,
ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri,
nec bene promeritis capitur nec tangitur ira.
50 Quod super est, vacuas auris animumque sagacem
semotum a curis adhibe veram ad rationem,
ne mea dona tibi studio disposta fideli,
intellecta prius quam sint, contempta relinquo.
nam tibi de summa caeli ratione deumque
55 disserere incipiam et rerum primordia pandam,
unde omnis natura creet res, auctet alatque,
quove eadem rursum natura perempta resolvat,

quae nos materiem et genitalia corpora rebus
 reddunda in ratione vocare et semina rerum
 60 appellare suemus et haec eadem usurpare
 corpora prima, quod ex illis sunt omnia primis.
 Humana ante oculos foede cum vita iaceret
 in terris oppressa gravi sub religione,
 quae caput a caeli regionibus ostendebat
 65 horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans,
 primum Graius homo mortalis tollere contra
 est oculos ausus primusque obsistere contra;
 quem neque fama deum nec fulmina nec minitanti
 murmure compressit caelum, sed eo magis acrem
 70 inritat animi virtutem, effringere ut arta
 naturae primus portarum claustra cupiret.
 ergo vivida vis animi pervicit et extra
 processit longe flammantia moenia mundi
 atque omne immensum peragravit mente animoque,
 75 unde refert nobis victor quid possit oriri,
 quid nequeat, finita potestas denique cuique
 qua nam sit ratione atque alte terminus haerens.
 quare religio pedibus subiecta vicissim
 opteritur, nos exaequat victoria caelo.

[30] for thou alone canst bless mankind with calm peace, seeing that Mavors
 lord of battle controls the savage works of war, Mavors who often flings
 himself into thy lap quite vanquished by the never-healing wound of love; and
 then with upturned face and shapely neck thrown back feeds with love his
 greedy sight gazing, goddess, open-mouthed on thee; and as backward he
 reclines, his breath stays hanging on thy lips While then, lady, he is reposing
 on thy holy body, shed thyself about him and above, and pour from thy lips
 sweet discourse, asking, glorious dame, gentle peace for the Romans.

For neither can we in our country's day of trouble with untroubled mind
 think only of our work, nor can the illustrious offset of Memmius in times like
 these be wanting to the general weal.

For what remains to tell, apply to true reason un-busied ears and a keen
 mind withdrawn from cares, lest my gifts set out for you with steadfast zeal
 you abandon with disdain, before they are understood.

For I will essay to discourse to you of the most high system of heaven and
 the gods and will open up the first beginnings of things, out of which nature
 gives birth to all things and increase and nourishment, and into which nature
 likewise dissolves them back after their destruction.

These we are accustomed in explaining their 'reason to call matter and
 begetting bodies of things and to name seeds of things and also to tern first
 bodies, because from them as first elements all things are.

When human life to view lay foully prostrate upon earth crushed down under the weight of religion, who showed her head from the quarters of heaven with hideous aspect lowering upon mortals, a man of Greece ventured first to lift up his mortal eyes to her face and first to withstand her to her face.

Him neither story of gods nor thunderbolts nor heaven with threatening roar could quell: they only chafed the more the eager courage of his soul, filling him with desire to be the first to burst the fast bars of nature's portals.

Therefore the living force of his soul gained the day: on he passed far beyond the flaming walls of the world and traversed throughout in mind and spirit the immeasurable universe; whence he returns a conqueror to tell us what can, what cannot come into being; in short on what principle each thing has its powers defined, its deep-set boundary mark.

Therefore religion is put underfoot and trampled upon in turn; us his victory brings level with heaven.

80 Illud in his rebus vereor, ne forte rearis
impia te rationis inire elementa viamque
indugredi sceleris. quod contra saepius illa
religio peperit scelerosa atque impia facta.
Aulide quo pacto Triviai virginis aram
85 Iphianassai turparunt sanguine foede
ductores Danaum delecti, prima virorum.
cui simul infula virgineos circum data comptus
ex utraque pari malarum parte profusast,
et maestum simul ante aras adstare parentem
90 sensit et hunc propter ferrum celare ministros
aspectuque suo lacrimas effundere civis,
muta metu terram genibus summissa petebat.
nec miserae prodesse in tali tempore quibat,
quod patrio princeps donarat nomine regem;
95 nam sublata virum manibus tremibundaque ad aras
deductast, non ut sollemni more sacrorum
perfecto posset claro comitari Hymenaeo,
sed casta incestu nubendi tempore in ipso
hostia concideret mactatu maesta parentis,
100 exitus ut classi felix faustusque daretur.
tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.
Tutemet a nobis iam quovis tempore vatum
terri loquis victus dictis desciscere quaeres.
quippe etenim quam multa tibi iam fingere possunt
105 somnia, quae vitae rationes vertere possint
fortunasque tuas omnis turbare timore!
et merito; nam si certam finem esse viderent
aerumnarum homines, aliqua ratione valerent

religionibus atque minis obsistere vatum.
110 nunc ratio nulla est restandi, nulla facultas,
aeternas quoniam poenas in morte timendum.
ignoratur enim quae sit natura animai,
nata sit an contra nascentibus insinuetur
et simul intereat nobiscum morte dirempta
115 an tenebras Orci visat vastasque lacunas
an pecudes alias divinitus insinuet se,
Ennius ut noster cecinit, qui primus amoeno
detulit ex Helicone perenni fronde coronam,
per gentis Italas hominum quae clara clueret;

[80] This is what I fear herein, lest haply you should fancy that you are entering on unholy grounds of reason and treading the path of sin; whereas on the contrary often and often that very religion has given birth to sinful and unholy deeds.

Thus in Aulis the chosen chieftains of the Danai, foremost of men, foully polluted with Iphianassa's blood the altar of the Trivian maid.

Soon as the fillet encircling her maiden tresses shed itself in equal lengths down each cheek, and soon as she saw her father standing sorrowful before the altars and beside him the ministering priests hiding the knife and her countrymen at sight of her shedding tears, speechless in terror she dropped down on her knees and sank to the ground.

Nor aught in such a moment could it avail the luckless girl that she had first bestowed the name of father on the king.

For lifted up in the hands of the men she was carried shivering to the altars, not after due performance of the customary rites to be escorted by the clear-ringing bridal song, but in the very season of marriage, stainless maid mid the stain of blood, to fall a sad victim by the sacrificing stroke of a father, that thus a happy and prosperous departure might be granted to the fleet.

So great the evils to which religion could prompt! You yourself some time or other overcome by the terror-speaking tales of the seers will seek to fall away from us.

Ay indeed for how many dreams may they now imagine for you, enough to upset the calculations of life and trouble all your fortunes with fear! And with good cause; for if men saw that there was a fixed limit to their woes, they would be able in some way to withstand the religious scruples and threatenings of the seers.

As it is, there is no way, no means of resisting, since they must fear after death everlasting pains.

For they cannot tell what is the nature of the soul, whether it be born or on the contrary find its way into men at their birth, and whether it perish together with us when severed from us by death or visit the gloom of Orcus and wasteful pools or by divine decree find its way into brutes in our stead, as

sang our Ennius who first brought down from delightful Helicon a crown of unfading leaf, destined to bright renown throughout Italian clans of men.

And yet with all this Ennius sets forth that there are Acherusian quarters, publishing it in immortal verses;

120 etsi praeterea tamen esse Acherusia templa
Ennius aeternis exponit versibus edens,
quo neque permaneant animae neque corpora nostra,
sed quaedam simulacra modis pallentia miris;
unde sibi exortam semper florentis Homeri

125 commemorat speciem lacrimas effundere salsas
coepisse et rerum naturam expandere dictis.
qua propter bene cum superis de rebus habenda
nobis est ratio, solis lunaeque meatus
qua fiant ratione, et qua vi quaeque gerantur

130 in terris, tunc cum primis ratione sagaci
unde anima atque animi constet natura videndum,
et quae res nobis vigilantibus obvia mentes
terrificet morbo adfectis somnoque sepultis,
cernere uti videamur eos audireque coram,

135 morte obita quorum tellus amplectitur ossa.
Nec me animi fallit Graiorum obscura reperta
difficile inlustrare Latinis versibus esse,
multa novis verbis praesertim cum sit agendum
propter egestatem linguae et rerum novitatem;

140 sed tua me virtus tamen et sperata voluptas
suavis amicitiae quemvis efferre laborem
suadet et inducit noctes vigilare serenas
quaerentem dictis quibus et quo carmine demum
clara tuae possim praepandere lumina menti,

145 res quibus occultas penitus convisere possis.
hunc igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque necessest
non radii solis neque lucida tela diei
discutiant, sed naturae species ratioque.

Principium cuius hinc nobis exordia sumet,
150 nullam rem e nihilo gigni divinitus umquam.
quippe ita formido mortalis continet omnis,
quod multa in terris fieri caeloque tuentur,
quorum operum causas nulla ratione videre
possunt ac fieri divino numine rentur.

quas ob res ubi viderimus nil posse creari
de nihilo, tum quod sequimur iam rectius inde
perspiciemus, et unde queat res quaeque creari
155 et quo quaeque modo fiant opera sine divom.

Nam si de nihilo fierent, ex omnibus rebus
omne genus nasci posset, nil semine egeret.
e mare primum homines, e terra posset oriri
squamigerum genus et volucres erumpere caelo;

[121] though in our passage thither neither our souls nor bodies hold together, but only certain idols pale in wondrous wise.

From these places he tells us the ghost of everliving Homer uprose before him and began to shed salt tears and to unfold in words the nature of things.

Wherefore we must well grasp the principle of things above, the principle by which the courses of the sun and moon go on, the force by which every thing on earth proceeds, but above all we must find out by keen reason what the soul and the nature of the mind consist of, and what thing it is-which meets us when awake and frightens our minds, if we are under the influence of disease; meets and frightens us too when we are buried in sleep; so that we seem to 'see and hear speaking to us face to face them who are dead, whose bones earth holds in its embrace.

Nor does my mind fail to perceive how hard it is to make clear in Latin verses the dark discoveries of the Greeks, especially as many points must be dealt with in new terms on account of the poverty of the language and the novelty of the questions.

But yet your worth and the looked-for pleasure of sweet friendship prompt me to undergo any labor and lead me on to watch the clear nights through, seeking by what words and in what verse I may be able in the end to shed on your mind so clear a light that you can thoroughly scan hidden things.

This terror then and darkness of mind must be dispelled not by the rays of the sun and glittering shafts of day, but by the aspect and the law of nature; the warp of whose design we shall begin with this first principle, nothing is ever gotten out of nothing by divine power.

Fear in sooth holds so in check all mortals, because they see many operations go on in earth and heaven, the causes of which they can in no way understand, believing them therefore to be done by power divine.

For these reasons when we shall have seen that nothing can be produced from nothing, we shall then more correctly ascertain that which we are seeking, both the elements out of which everything can be produced and the manner in which all things are done without the hand of the gods.

If things came from nothing, any kind might be born of any thing, nothing would require seed.

Men for instance might rise out of the sea, the scaly race out of the earth, and birds might burst out of the sky;

armenta atque aliae pecudes, genus omne ferarum,
incerto partu culta ac deserta tenerent.

165 nec fructus idem arboribus constare solerent,
sed mutarentur, ferre omnes omnia possent.

quippe ubi non essent genitalia corpora cuique,
qui posset mater rebus consistere certa?
at nunc seminibus quia certis quaeque creantur,
170 inde enascitur atque oras in luminis exit,
materies ubi inest cuiusque et corpora prima;
atque hac re nequeunt ex omnibus omnia gigni,
quod certis in rebus inest secreta facultas.
Praeterea cur vere rosam, frumenta calore,
175 vites autumnus fundi suadente videmus,
si non, certa suo quia tempore semina rerum
cum confluerunt, patefit quod cumque creatur,
dum tempestates adsunt et vivida tellus
tuto res teneras effert in luminis oras?
180 quod si de nihilo fierent, subito exorerentur
incerto spatio atque alienis partibus anni,
quippe ubi nulla forent primordia, quae genitali
concilio possent arceri tempore iniquo.
Nec porro augendis rebus spatio foret usus
185 seminis ad coitum, si e nilo crescere possent;
nam fierent iuvenes subito ex infantibus parvis
e terraque exorta repente arbusta salirent.
quorum nil fieri manifestum est, omnia quando
paulatim crescunt, ut par est semine certo,
190 crescentesque genus servant; ut noscere possis
quicque sua de materia grandescere alique.
Huc accedit uti sine certis imbribus anni
laetificos nequeat fetus submittere tellus
nec porro secreta cibo natura animantium
195 propagare genus possit vitamque tueri;
ut potius multis communia corpora rebus
multa putes esse, ut verbis elementa videmus,
quam sine principiis ullam rem existere posse.
Denique cur homines tantos natura parare
200 non potuit, pedibus qui pontum per vada possent
transire et magnos manibus divellere montis
multaque vivendo vitalia vincere saecula,
si non, materies quia rebus reddita certast
gignundis, e qua constat quid possit oriri?
205 nil igitur fieri de nilo posse fatendumst,
semine quando opus est rebus, quo quaeque creatae
aeris in teneras possint proferrier auras.

[163] horned and other herds, every kind of wild beasts would haunt with
changing broad tilth and wilderness alike.

Nor would the same fruits keep constant to trees, but would change; any tree might bear any fruit.

For if there were not begetting bodies for each, how could things have a fixed unvarying mother?

But in fact because things are all produced from fixed seeds, each thing is born and goes forth into the borders of light out of that in which resides its matter and first bodies; and for this reason all things cannot be gotten out of all things, because in particular things resides a distinct power.

Again, why do we see the rose put forth in spring, corn in the season of heat, vines yielding at the call of autumn, if not because, when the fixed seeds of things have streamed together at the proper time, whatever is born discloses itself, while the due seasons are there and the quickened earth brings its weakly products in safety forth into the borders of light?

But if they came from nothing, they would rise up suddenly at uncertain periods and unsuitable times of year, inasmuch as there would be no first-beginnings to be kept from a begetting union by the unpropitious season.

No nor would time be required for the growth of things after the meeting of the seed, if they could increase out of nothing.

Little babies would at once grow into men and trees in a moment would rise and spring out of the ground.

But none of these events it is plain ever comes to pass, since all things grow step by step [at a fixed time], as is natural, [since they all grow] from a fixed seed and in growing preserve their kind; so that you may be sure that all things increase in size and are fed out of their own matter.

Furthermore without fixed seasons of rain the earth is unable to put forth its gladdening produce, nor again if kept from food could the nature of living things continue its kind and sustain life; so that you may hold with greater truth that many bodies are common to many things, as we see letters common to different words, than that anything could come into being without first-beginnings.

Again why could not nature have produced men of such a size and strength as to be able to wade on foot across the sea and rend great mountains with their hands and outlive many generations of living men, if not because an unchanging matter has been assigned for begetting things and what can arise out of this matter is fixed? We must admit therefore that nothing can come from nothing, since things require seed before they can severally be born and be brought out into the buxom fields of air.

Postremo quoniam incultis praestare videmus
cultā loca et manibus melioris reddere fetus,
210 esse videlicet in terris primordia rerum
quae nos fecundas vertentes vomere glebas
terraique solum subigentes cimus ad ortus;
quod si nulla forent, nostro sine quaque labore

sponte sua multo fieri meliora videres.

215 Huc accedit uti quicque in sua corpora rursum
dissoluat natura neque ad nihilum interemat res.
nam siquid mortale e cunctis partibus esset,
ex oculis res quaeque repente erepta periret;
nulla vi foret usus enim, quae partibus eius
220 discidium parere et nexus exsolvere posset.
quod nunc, aeterno quia constant semine quaeque,
donec vis obiit, quae res diverberet ictu
aut intus penetret per inania dissoluatque,
nullius exitium patitur natura videri.

225 Praeterea quae cumque vetustate amovet aetas,
si penitus peremit consumens materiem omnem,
unde animale genus generatim in lumina vitae
redducit Venus, aut reductum daedala tellus
unde alit atque auget generatim pabula praebens?

230 unde mare ingenui fontes externaque longe
flumina suppeditant? unde aether sidera pascit?
omnia enim debet, mortali corpore quae sunt,
infinita aetas consumpse ante acta diesque.
quod si in eo spatio atque ante acta aetate fuere
235 e quibus haec rerum consistit summa refecta,
immortali sunt natura praedita certe.

haud igitur possunt ad nilum quaeque reverti.
Denique res omnis eadem vis causaque volgo
conficeret, nisi materies aeterna teneret,
240 inter se nexus minus aut magis indupedita;
tactus enim leti satis esset causa profecto,
quippe ubi nulla forent aeterno corpore, quorum
contextum vis deberet dissolvere quaeque.

at nunc, inter se quia nexus principiorum
245 dissimiles constant aeternaque materies est,
incolumi remanent res corpore, dum satis acris
vis obeat pro textura cuiusque reperta.

[207] Lastly, since we see that tilled grounds surpass untilled and yield a better produce by the labor of hands, we may infer that there are in the earth first-beginnings of things which by turning up the fruitful clods with the share and laboring the soil of the earth we stimulate to rise.

But if there were not such, you would see all things without any labor of ours spontaneously come forth in much greater perfection.

Moreover nature dissolves every thing back into its first bodies and does not annihilate things.

For if aught were mortal in all its parts alike, the thing in a moment would

be snatched away to destruction from before our eyes; since no force would be needed to produce disruption among its parts and undo their fastenings.

Whereas in fact, as all things consist of an imperishable seed, nature suffers the destruction of nothing to be seen, until a force has encountered it sufficient to dash things to pieces by a blow or to pierce through the void places within them and break them up.

Again if time, whenever it makes away with things through age, utterly destroys them eating up all their matter, out of what does Venus bring back into the light of life the race of living things each after its kind, or, when they are brought back, out of what does earth manifold in works give them nourishment and increase, furnishing them with food each after its kind? Out of what do its own native fountains and extraneous rivers from far and wide keep full the sea? Out of what does ether feed the stars? For infinite time gone by and lapse of days must have eaten up all things which are of mortal body.

Now if in that period of time gone by those things have existed, of which this sum of things is composed and recruited, they are possessed no doubt of an imperishable body, and cannot therefore any of them return to nothing.

Again the same force and cause would destroy all things without distinction, unless everlasting matter held them together, matter more or less closely linked in mutual entanglement: a touch in sooth would be sufficient cause of death, inasmuch as any amount of force must of course undo the texture of things in which no parts at all were of an everlasting body.

But in fact, because the fastenings of first-beginnings one with the other are unlike and matter is everlasting, things continue with body uninjured, until a force is found to encounter them strong enough to overpower the texture of each thing therefore never returns to nothing, but all things after disruption go back into the first bodies of matter.

haud igitur redit ad nihilum res ulla, sed omnes
discidio redeunt in corpora materialia.

250 postremo pereunt imbres, ubi eos pater aether
in gremium matris terrae praecipitavit;

at nitidae surgunt fruges ramique virescunt
arboribus, crescunt ipsae fetuque gravantur.

hinc alitur porro nostrum genus atque ferarum,

255 hinc laetas urbes pueris florere videmus
frondiferasque novis avibus canere undique silvas,

hinc fessae pecudes pinguis per pabula laeta
corpora deponunt et candens lacteus umor

uberibus manat distentis, hinc nova proles

260 artubus infirmis teneras lasciva per herbas

ludit lacte mero mentes percussa novellas.

haud igitur penitus pereunt quaecumque videntur,
quando alit ex alio reficit natura nec ullam

rem gigni patitur nisi morte adiuta aliena.

265 Nunc age, res quoniam docui non posse creari
de nihilo neque item genitas ad nil revocari,
ne qua forte tamen coeples diffidere dictis,
quod nequeunt oculis rerum primordia cerni,
accipe praeterea quae corpora tute necessest
270 confiteare esse in rebus nec posse videri.

Principio venti vis verberat incita corpus
ingentisque ruit navis et nubila differt,
inter dum rapido percurrens turbine campos
arboribus magnis sternit montisque supremos
275 silvifragis vexat flabris: ita perfurit acri
cum fremitu saevitque minaci murmure pontus.
sunt igitur venti ni mirum corpora caeca,
quae mare, quae terras, quae denique nubila caeli
verrunt ac subito vexantia turbine raptant,
280 nec ratione fluunt alia stragemque propagant
et cum mollis aquae fertur natura repente
flumine abundanti, quam largis imbribus auget
montibus ex altis magnus decursus aquai
fragmina coniciens silvarum arbustaque tota,
285 nec validi possunt pontes venientis aquai
vim subitam tolerare: ita magno turbidus imbri
molibus incurrit validis cum viribus amnis,
dat sonitu magno stragem volvitque sub undis
grandia saxa, ruit qua quidquid fluctibus obstat.

[248] Lastly, rains die, when father ether has tumbled them into the lap of mother earth; but then goodly crops spring up and boughs are green with leaves upon the trees, trees themselves grow and are laden with fruit; by them in turn our race and the race of wild beasts are fed, by them we see glad towns teem with children and the leafy forests ring on all sides with the song of new birds; through them cattle wearied with their load of fat lay their bodies down about the glad pastures and the white milky stream pours from the distended udders; through them a new brood with weakly limbs frisks and gambols over the soft grass, rapt in their young hearts with the pure new milk.

None of the things therefore which seem to be lost is utterly lost, since nature replenishes one thing out of another and does not suffer any thing to be begotten, before she has been recruited by the death of some other.

Now mark me: since I have taught that things cannot be born from nothing, cannot when begotten be brought back to nothing, that you may not haply yet begin in any shape to mistrust my words, because the first-beginnings of things cannot be seen by the eyes, take moreover this list of bodies which you must yourself admit are in the number of things and cannot be seen.

First of all the force of the wind when aroused beats on the harbors and whelms huge ships and scatters clouds; sometimes in swift whirling eddy it scours the plains and straws them with large trees and scourges the mountain summits with forest-rending blasts: so fiercely does the wind rave with a shrill howling and rage with threatening roar.

Winds therefore sure enough are unseen bodies which sweep the seas, the lands, ay and the clouds of heaven, tormenting them and catching them up in sudden whirls.

On they stream and spread destruction abroad in just the same way as the soft liquid nature of water, when all at once it is borne along in an overflowing stream, and a great downfall of water from the high hills augments it with copious rains, flinging together fragments of forests and entire trees; nor can the strong bridges sustain the sudden force of coming water: in such wise turbid with much rain the river dashes upon the piers with mighty force: makes havoc with loud noise and rolls under its eddies huge stones:

290 sic igitur debent venti quoque flamina ferri,
quae vel uti validum cum flumen procubuere
quam libet in partem, tridunt res ante ruuntque
impetibus crebris, inter dum vertice torto
corripiunt rapidique rotanti turbine portant.
295 quare etiam atque etiam sunt venti corpora caeca,
quandoquidem factis et moribus aemula magnis
amnibus inveniuntur, aperto corpore qui sunt.
Tum porro varios rerum sentimus odores
nec tamen ad naris venientis cernimus umquam
300 nec calidos aestus tuimur nec frigora quimus
usurpare oculis nec voces cernere suemus;
quae tamen omnia corporea constare necessest
natura, quoniam sensus inpellere possunt;
tangere enim et tangi, nisi corpus, nulla potest res.
305 Denique fluctifrago suspensae in litore vestis
uvescunt, eadem dispansae in sole serescunt.
at neque quo pacto persederit umor aquai
visumst nec rursus quo pacto fugerit aestu.
in parvas igitur partis dispergitur umor,
310 quas oculi nulla possunt ratione videre.
quin etiam multis solis redeuntibus annis
anulus in digito subter tenuatur habendo,
stilicidi casus lapidem cavat, uncus aratri
ferreus occulte decrescit vomer in arvis,
315 strataque iam volgi pedibus detrita viarum
saxea conspicimus; tum portas propter aena
signa manus dextras ostendunt adtenuari

saepe salutantum tactu praeterque meantum.
haec igitur minui, cum sint detrita, videmus.
320 sed quae corpora decedant in tempore quoque,
invida praecluserit speciem natura videndi.
Postremo quae cumque dies naturaque rebus
paulatim tribuit moderatim crescere cogens,
nulla potest oculorum acies contenta tueri,
325 nec porro quae cumque aevo macieque senescunt,
nec, mare quae impendent, vesco sale saxa peresa
quid quoque amittant in tempore cernere possis.
corporibus caecis igitur natura gerit res.
Nec tamen undique corporea stipata tenentur
330 omnia natura; namque est in rebus inane.
quod tibi cognosse in multis erit utile rebus
nec sinet errantem dubitare et quaerere semper
de summa rerum et nostris diffidere dictis.

[289] wherever aught opposes its waves, down it dashes it.

In this way then must the blasts of wind as well move on, and when they like a mighty stream have borne down in any direction, they push things before them and throw them down with repeated assaults, sometimes catch them up in curling eddy and carry them away in swift-circling whirl.

Wherefore once and again I say winds are unseen bodies, since in their works and ways they are found to rival great rivers which are of a visible body.

Then again we perceive the different smells of things, \yet never see them coming to our nostrils; nor do we behold heats nor can we observe cold with the eyes nor are we used to see voices.

Yet all these things must consist of a bodily nature, since they are able to move the senses; for nothing but body can touch and be touched.

Again clothes hung up on a -'shore which waves break upon become moist, and then get dry if spread out in the sun.

Yet it has not been seen in what way the moisture of water has sunk into them nor again in what way this has been dispelled by heat.

The moisture therefore is dispersed into small particles which the eyes are quite unable to see.

Again after the revolution of many of the sun's years a ring on the finger is thinned on the under side by wearing, the dripping from the eaves hollows a stone, the bent plowshare of iron imperceptibly decreases in the fields, and we behold the stone-paved streets worn down by the feet of the multitude; the brass statues too at the gates show their right hands to be wasted by the touch of the numerous passers by who greet them.

These things then we see are lessened, since they have been thus worn down; but what bodies depart at any given time the nature of vision has

jealously shut out our seeing.

Lastly the bodies which time and nature add to things by little and little, constraining them to grow in due measure, no exertion of the eyesight can behold; and so too wherever things grow old by age and decay, and when rocks hanging over the sea are eaten away by the gnawing salt spray, you cannot see what they lose at any given moment Nature therefore works by unseen bodies.

And yet all things are not on all sides jammed together and kept in by body: there is also void in things.

To have learned this will be good for you on many accounts; it will not suffer you to wander in doubt and be to seek in the sum of things and, distrustful of our words.

If there were not void, things could not move at all;

qua propter locus est intactus inane vacansque.

335 quod si non esset, nulla ratione moveri
res possent; namque officium quod corporis exstat,
officere atque obstare, id in omni tempore adesset
omnibus; haud igitur quicquam procedere posset,
principium quoniam cedendi nulla daret res.

340 at nunc per maria ac terras sublimaque caeli
multa modis multis varia ratione moveri
cernimus ante oculos, quae, si non esset inane,
non tam sollicito motu privata carerent
quam genita omnino nulla ratione fuissent,

345 undique materies quoniam stipata quiesset.
Praeterea quamvis solidae res esse putentur,
hinc tamen esse licet raro cum corpore cernas.
in saxis ac speluncis permanat aquarum
liquidus umor et uberibus flent omnia guttis.

350 dissipat in corpus sese cibus omne animantum;
crescunt arbusta et fetus in tempore fundunt,
quod cibus in totas usque ab radicibus imis
per truncos ac per ramos diffunditur omnis.
inter saepta meant voces et clausa domorum

355 transvolitant, rigidum permanat frigus ad ossa.
quod nisi inania sint, qua possent corpora quaeque
transire, haud ulla fieri ratione videres.

Denique cur alias aliis praestare videmus
pondere res rebus nihilo maiore figura?

360 nam si tantundemst in lanae glomere quantum
corporis in plumbo est, tantundem pendere par est,
corporis officiumst quoniam premere omnia deorsum,
contra autem natura manet sine pondere inanis.

ergo quod magnumst aequè leviusque videtur,
365 ni mirum plus esse sibi declarat inanis;
at contra gravius plus in se corporis esse
dedicat et multo vacui minus intus habere.
est igitur ni mirum id quod ratione sagaci
quaerimus, admixtum rebus, quod inane vocamus.
370 Illud in his rebus ne te deducere vero
possit, quod quidam fingunt, praecurrere cogor.
cedere squamigeris latices nitentibus aiunt
et liquidas aperire vias, quia post loca pisces
linquant, quo possint cedentes confluere undae;
375 sic alias quoque res inter se posse moveri
et mutare locum, quamvis sint omnia plena.
scilicet id falsa totum ratione receptumst.
nam quo squamigeri poterunt procedere tandem,
ni spatium dederint latices? concedere porro
380 quo poterunt undae, cum pisces ire nequibunt?

[334] for that which is the property of body, to let and hinder, would be present to all things at all times; nothing therefore could go on, since no other thing would be the first to give way.

But in fact throughout seas and lands and the heights of heaven we see before our eyes many things move in many ways for various reasons, which things, if there were no void, I need not say would lack and want restless motion: they never would have been begotten at all, since matter jammed on all sides would have been at rest Again however solid things are thought to be, you may yet learn from this that they are of rare body: in rocks and caverns the moisture of water oozes through and all things weep with abundant drops; food distributes itself through the whole body of living things; trees grow and yield fruit in season, because food is diffused through the whole from the very roots over the stem and all the boughs.

Voices pass through walls and fly through houses shut, stiffening frost pierces to the bones.

Now if there are no void parts, by what way can the bodies severally pass? You would see it to be quite impossible.

Once more, why do we see one thing surpass another in weight though not larger in size? For if there is just as much body in a ball of wool as there is in a lump of lead, it is natural it should weigh the same, since the property of body is to weigh all things downwards, while on the contrary the nature of void is ever without weight.

Therefore when a thing is just as large, yet is found to be void in it; while on the other hand that which is lighter, it proves sure enough that it has more of 'heavier shows that there is in it more of body and that it contains within it much less of void.

Therefore that which we are seeking with keen reason exists sure enough, mixed up in things; and we call it void. And herein I am obliged to forestall this point which some raise, lest it draw you away from the truth.

The waters they say make way for the scaly creatures as they press on, and open liquid paths, because the fish leave room behind them, into which the yielding waters may stream; thus other things too may move and change place among themselves, although the whole sum be full.

This you are to know has been taken up on grounds wholly false.

For on what side I ask can the scaly creatures move forwards, unless the waters have first made room? Again on what side can the waters give place, so long as the fish are unable to go on?

aut igitur motu privandumst corpora quaeque
aut esse admixtum dicundumst rebus inane,
unde initum primum capiat res quaeque movendi.
Postremo duo de concursu corpora lata
385 si cita dissiliant, nempe aer omne necessest,
inter corpora quod fiat, possidat inane.
is porro quamvis circum celerantibus auris
confluat, haud poterit tamen uno tempore totum
compleri spatium; nam primum quemque necessest
390 occupet ille locum, deinde omnia possideantur.
quod si forte aliquis, cum corpora dissiluire,
tum putat id fieri quia se condenseat aer,
errat; nam vacuum tum fit quod non fuit ante
et repletur item vacuum quod constitit ante,
395 nec tali ratione potest denserier aer
nec, si iam posset, sine inani posset, opinor,
ipse in se trahere et partis conducere in unum.
Qua propter, quamvis causando multa moreris,
esse in rebus inane tamen fateare necessest.
400 multaque praeterea tibi possum commemorando
argumenta fidem dictis conradere nostris.
verum animo satis haec vestigia parva sagaci
sunt, per quae possis cognoscere cetera tute.
namque canes ut montivagae persaepe ferai
405 naribus inveniunt intectas fronde quietes,
cum semel institerunt vestigia certa viai,
sic alid ex alio per te tute ipse videre
talibus in rebus poteris caecasque latebras
insinuare omnis et verum protrahere inde.
410 quod si pigraris paulumve recesseris ab re,
hoc tibi de plano possum promittere, Memmi:
usque adeo largos haustus e fontibus magnis

lingua meo suavis diti de pectore fundet,
ut verear ne tarda prius per membra senectus
415 serpat et in nobis vitai claustra resolvat,
quam tibi de quavis una re versibus omnis
argumentorum sit copia missa per auris.
Sed nunc ut repetam coeptum pertexere dictis,
omnis ut est igitur per se natura duabus
420 constitit in rebus; nam corpora sunt et inane,
haec in quo sita sunt et qua diversa moventur.
corpus enim per se communis dedicat esse
sensus; cui nisi prima fides fundata valebit,
haut erit occultis de rebus quo referentes
425 confirmare animi quicquam ratione queamus.

[380] Therefore you must either strip all bodies of motion or admit that in things void is mixed up from which every thing gets its first start in moving.

Lastly if two broad bodies after contact quickly spring asunder, the air must surely fill all the void which is formed between the bodies.

Well however rapidly it stream together with swift-circling currents, yet the whole space will not be able to be filled up in one moment for it must occupy first one spot and then another, until the whole is taken up.

But if haply any one supposes that, when the bodies have started asunder, that result follows because the air condenses, he is mistaken; for a void is then formed which was not before, and a void also is filled which existed before; nor can the air condense in such a way, nor supposing it could, could it methinks without void draw into itself and bring its parts together.

Wherefore however long you hold out by urging many objections, you must needs in the end admit that there is a void in things.

And many more arguments I may state to you in order to accumulate proof on my words; but these slight footprints are enough for a keen-searching mind to enable you by yourself to find out all the rest.

For as dogs often discover by smell the lair of a mountain-ranging wild beast though covered over with leaves, when once they have got on the sure tracks, thus you in cases like this will be able by yourself alone to see one thing after another and find your way into all dark corners and draw forth the truth.

But if you lag or swerve a jot from the reality, this I can promise you, Memmius, without more ado: such plenteous draughts from abundant wellsprings my sweet tongue shall pour from my richly furnished breast, that I fear slow age will steal over our limbs and break open in us the fastnesses of life, ere the whole store of reasons on any one question has by my verses been dropped into your ears.

But now to resume the thread of the design which I am weaving in verse: all nature then, as it exists by itself, is founded on two things: there are bodies

and there is void in which these bodies are placed and through which they move about.

For that body exists by itself the general feeling of man kind declares; and unless at the very first belief in this be firmly grounded, there will be nothing to which we can appeal on hidden things in order to prove anything by reasoning of mind.

tum porro locus ac spatium, quod inane vocamus,
si nullum foret, haut usquam sita corpora possent
esse neque omnino quoquam diversa meare;
id quod iam supera tibi paulo ostendimus ante.

430 praeterea nihil est quod possis dicere ab omni
corpore seiunctum secretumque esse ab inani,
quod quasi tertia sit numero natura reperta.

nam quod cumque erit, esse aliquid debebit id ipsum
augmine vel grandi vel parvo denique, dum sit;

435 cui si tactus erit quamvis levis exiguusque,
corporis augebit numerum summamque sequetur;
sin intactile erit, nulla de parte quod ullam
rem prohibere queat per se transire meantem,
scilicet hoc id erit, vacuum quod inane vocamus.

440 Praeterea per se quod cumque erit, aut faciet quid
aut aliis fungi debebit agentibus ipsum
aut erit ut possint in eo res esse gerique.

at facere et fungi sine corpore nulla potest res
nec praebere locum porro nisi inane vacansque.

445 ergo praeter inane et corpora tertia per se
nulla potest rerum in numero natura relinqui,
nec quae sub sensus cadat ullo tempore nostros
nec ratione animi quam quisquam possit apisci.

Nam quae cumque cluent, aut his coniuncta duabus

450 rebus ea invenies aut horum eventa videbis.
coniunctum est id quod nusquam sine permitiali
discidio potis est seiungi seque gregari,
pondus uti saxis, calor ignis, liquor aquai,
tactus corporibus cunctis, intactus inani.

455 servitium contra paupertas divitiaeque,
libertas bellum concordia cetera quorum
adventu manet incolumis natura abituque,
haec soliti sumus, ut par est, eventa vocare.

tempus item per se non est, sed rebus ab ipsis

460 consequitur sensus, transactum quid sit in aevo,
tum quae res instet, quid porro deinde sequatur;
nec per se quemquam tempus sentire fatendumst

semotum ab rerum motu placidaque quiete.
denique Tyndaridem raptam belloque subactas
465 Troiigenas gentis cum dicunt esse, videndumst
ne forte haec per se cogant nos esse fateri,
quando ea saecula hominum, quorum haec eventa fuerunt,
inrevocabilis abstulerit iam praeterita aetas;

[425] Then again, if room and space which we call void did not exist, bodies could not be placed anywhere nor move about at all to any side; as we have demonstrated to you a little before.

Moreover there is nothing which you can affirm to be at once separate from all body and quite distinct from void, which would so to say count as the discovery of a third nature.

For whatever shall exist, this of itself must be something or other.

Now if it shall admit of touch in however slight and small a measure, it will, be it with a large or be it with a little addition, provided it do exist, increase the amount of body and join the sum.

But if it shall be intangible and unable to hinder any thing from passing through it on any side, this you are to know will be that which we call empty void.

Again whatever shall exist by itself, will either do something or will itself suffer by the action of other things, or will be of such a nature as things are able to exist and go on in.

But no thing can do and suffer without body, nor aught furnish room except void and vacancy.

Therefore beside void and bodies no third nature taken by itself can be left in the number of things, either such as to fall at any time under the ken of our senses or such as any one can grasp by the reason of his mind.

For whatever things are named, you will either find to be properties linked to these two things or you will see to be accidents of these things.

That is a property which can in no case be disjoined and separated without utter destruction accompanying the severance, such as the weight of a stone, the heat of fire, the fluidity of water.

Slavery on the other hand, poverty and riches, liberty war concord and all other things which may come and go while the nature of the thing remains unharmed, these we are wont, as it is right we should, to call accidents.

Time also exists not by itself, but simply from the things which happen the sense apprehends what has been done in time past, as well as what is present and what is to follow after.

And we must admit that no one feels time by itself abstracted from the motion and calm rest of things.

So when they say that the daughter of Tyndarus was ravished and the Trojan nations were subdued in war, we must mind that they do not force us to admit that these things are by themselves, since those generations of men,

of whom these things were accidents, time now gone by has irrevocably swept away.

namque aliud terris, aliud regionibus ipsis
470 eventum dici poterit quod cumque erit actum.
denique materies si rerum nulla fuisset
nec locus ac spatium, res in quo quaeque geruntur,
numquam Tyndaridis forma conflatus amore
ignis Alexandri Phrygio sub pectore gliscens
475 clara accendisset saevi certamina belli
nec clam durateus Troiianis Pergama partu
inflammasset equos nocturno Graiugenarum;
perspicere ut possis res gestas funditus omnis
non ita uti corpus per se constare neque esse
480 nec ratione cluere eadem qua constet inane,
sed magis ut merito possis eventa vocare
corporis atque loci, res in quo quaeque gerantur.
Corpora sunt porro partim primordia rerum,
partim concilio quae constant principiorum.
485 sed quae sunt rerum primordia, nulla potest vis
stinguere; nam solido vincunt ea corpore demum.
etsi difficile esse videtur credere quicquam
in rebus solido reperiri corpore posse.
transit enim fulmen caeli per saepta domorum
490 clamor ut ac voces, ferrum candescit in igni
dissiliuntque fero ferventi saxa vapore;
cum labefactatus rigor auri solvitur aestu,
tum glacies aeris flamma devicta liquescit;
permanat calor argentum penetraleque frigus,
495 quando utrumque manu retinentes pocula rite
sensimus infuso lympharum rore superne.
usque adeo in rebus solidi nihil esse videtur.
sed quia vera tamen ratio naturae rerum
cogit, ades, paucis dum versibus expediamus
500 esse ea quae solido atque aeterno corpore constant,
semina quae rerum primordiaque esse docemus,
unde omnis rerum nunc constet summa creata.
Principio quoniam duplex natura duarum
dissimilis rerum longe constare repertast,
505 corporis atque loci, res in quo quaeque geruntur,
esse utramque sibi per se puramque necessesse.
nam qua cumque vacat spatium, quod inane vocamus,
corpus ea non est; qua porro cumque tenet se
corpus, ea vacuum nequaquam constat inane.

[468] For whatever shall have been done may be termed an accident in one case of the Teucran people, in another of the countries simply.

Yes for if there had been no matter of things and no room and space in which things severally go on, never had the fire, kindled by love of the beauty of Tyndarus' daughter, blazed beneath the Phrygian breast of Alexander and lighted up the famous struggles of cruel war, nor had the timber horse unknown to the Trojans wrapt Pergama in flames by its night-issuing brood of sons of the Greeks; so that you may clearly perceive that all actions from first to last exist not by themselves and are not by themselves in the way that body is, nor are terms of the same kind as void is, but are rather of such a kind that you may fairly call them accidents of body and of the room in which they severally go on.

Bodies again are partly first-beginnings of things, partly those which are formed of a union of first beginnings.

But those which are first-beginnings of things no force can quench: they are sure to have the better by their solid body.

Although it seems difficult to believe that aught can be found among things with a solid body.

For the lightning of heaven passes through the walls of houses, as well as noise and voices; iron grows red-hot in the fire and stones burn with fierce heat and burst asunder the hardness of gold is broken up and dissolved by heat; the ice of brass melts vanquished by the flame; warmth and piercing cold ooze through silver, since we have felt both, as we held cups with the hand in due fashion and the water was poured down into them.

So universally there is found to be nothing solid in things.

But yet because true reason and the nature of things constrains, attend until we make clear in a few verses that there are such things as consist of solid and everlasting body, which we teach are seeds of things and first-beginnings, out of which the whole sum of things which now exists has been produced.

First of all then since there has been found to exist a two-fold and widely dissimilar nature of two things, that is to say of body and of place in which things severally go on, each of the two must exist for and by itself and quite unmingled.

For wherever there is empty space which we call void, there body is not; wherever again body maintains itself, there empty void no wise exists.

First bodies therefore are solid and without void.

Praeterea quoniam genitis in rebus inanest,
 materiem circum solidam constare necessest;
 nec res ulla potest vera ratione probari
 corpore inane suo celare atque intus habere,
 515 si non, quod cohibet, solidum constare relinquant.
 id porro nihil esse potest nisi materialia

concilium, quod inane queat rerum cohibere.
materies igitur, solido quae corpore constat,
esse aeterna potest, cum cetera dissoluantur.
520 Tum porro si nil esset quod inane vocaret,
omne foret solidum; nisi contra corpora certa
essent quae loca complerent quae cumque tenerent
omne quod est spatium, vacuum constaret inane.
alternis igitur ni mirum corpus inani
525 distinctum, quoniam nec plenum naviter extat
nec porro vacuum; sunt ergo corpora certa,
quae spatium pleno possint distinguere inane.
haec neque dissolui plagis extrinsecus icta
possunt nec porro penitus penetrata retexi
530 nec ratione queunt alia temptata labare;
id quod iam supra tibi paulo ostendimus ante.
nam neque conlidi sine inani posse videtur
quicquam nec frangi nec findi in bina secando
nec capere umorem neque item manabile frigus
535 nec penetralem ignem, quibus omnia conficiuntur.
et quo quaeque magis cohibet res intus inane,
tam magis his rebus penitus temptata labascit.
ergo si solida ac sine inani corpora prima
sunt ita uti docui, sint haec aeterna necessest.
540 Praeterea nisi materies aeterna fuisset,
antehac ad nihilum penitus res quaeque redissent
de nihiloque renata forent quae cumque videmus.
at quoniam supra docui nil posse creari
de nihilo neque quod genitumst ad nil revocari,
545 esse inmortali primordia corpore debent,
dissolui quo quaeque supremo tempore possint,
materies ut subpeditet rebus reparandis.
sunt igitur solida primordia simplicitate
nec ratione queunt alia servata per aevom
550 ex infinito iam tempore res reparare.
denique si nullam finem natura parasset
frangendis rebus, iam corpora materiai
usque redacta forent aevo frangente priore,
ut nihil ex illis a certo tempore posset
555 conceptum summum aetatis pervadere finem.

[511] Again since there is void in things begotten, solid matter must exist about this void, and no thing can be proved by true reason to conceal in its body and have within it void, unless you choose to allow that that which holds it in is solid.

Again that can be nothing but a union of matter which can keep in the void of things.

Matter therefore, which consists of a solid body, may be everlasting, though all things else are dissolved.

Moreover, if there were no empty void, the universe would be solid; unless on the other hand there were certain bodies to fill up whatever places they occupied, the existing universe would be empty and void space.

Therefore sure enough body and void are marked off in alternate layers, since the universe is neither of a perfect fulness nor a perfect void.

There are therefore certain bodies which can vary void space with full.

These can neither be broken in pieces by the stroke of blows from without nor have their texture undone by aught piercing to their core nor give way before any other kind of assault; as we have proved to you a little before.

For without void nothing seems to admit of being crushed in or broken up or split in two by cutting, or of taking in wet or permeating cold or penetrating fire, by which all things are destroyed.

And the more anything contains within it of void, the more thoroughly it gives way to the assault of these things.

Therefore if first bodies are as I have shown solid and without void, they must be everlasting.

Again unless matter had been eternal, all things before this would have utterly returned to nothing and whatever things we see would have been born anew from nothing.

But since I have proved above that nothing can be produced from nothing, and that what is begotten cannot be called to nothing, first-beginnings must be of an imperishable body, into which all things can be dissolved at their last hour, that there may be a supply of matter for the reproduction of things.

Therefore first-beginnings are of solid singleness, and in no other way can they have been preserved through ages during infinite time past in order to reproduce things.

Again if nature had set no limit to the breaking of things, by this time the bodies of matter would have been so far reduced by the breaking of past "ages that nothing could within a fixed time be conceived out of them and reach its utmost growth of being.

For we see that anything is more quickly destroyed than again renewed;

nam quidvis citius dissolvi posse videmus
quam rursus refici; qua propter longa diei
infinita aetas ante acti temporis omnis
quod fregisset adhuc disturbans dissoluensque,
560 numquam relicuo reparari tempore posset.
at nunc ni mirum frangendi reddita finis
certa manet, quoniam refici rem quamque videmus
et finita simul generatim tempora rebus

stare, quibus possint aevi contingere florem.
 565 Huc accedit uti, solidissima materiai
 corpora cum constant, possint tamen omnia reddi,
 mollia quae fiunt, aer aqua terra vapores,
 quo pacto fiant et qua vi quaeque gerantur,
 admixtum quoniam semel est in rebus inane.
 570 at contra si mollia sint primordia rerum,
 unde queant validi silices ferrumque creari,
 non poterit ratio reddi; nam funditus omnis
 principio fundamenti natura carebit.
 sunt igitur solida pollentia simplicitate,
 575 quorum condenseo magis omnia conciliatu
 artari possunt validasque ostendere viris.
 porro si nullast frangendis reddita finis
 corporibus, tamen ex aeterno tempore quaeque
 nunc etiam superare necessest corpora rebus,
 580 quae non dum clueant ullo temptata periclo.
 at quoniam fragili natura praedita constant,
 discrepat aeternum tempus potuisse manere
 innumerabilibus plagis vexata per aevom.
 Denique iam quoniam generatim reddita finis
 585 crescendi rebus constat vitamque tenendi,
 et quid quaeque queant per foedera naturai,
 quid porro nequeant, sancitum quando quidem extat,
 nec commutatur quicquam, quin omnia constant
 usque adeo, variae volucres ut in ordine cunctae
 590 ostendant maculas generalis corpore inesse,
 inmutabilis materiae quoque corpus habere
 debent ni mirum; nam si primordia rerum
 commutari aliqua possent ratione revicta,
 incertum quoque iam constet quid possit oriri,
 595 quid nequeat, finita potestas denique cuique
 qua nam sit ratione atque alte terminus haerens,
 nec totiens possent generatim saecula referre
 naturam mores victum motusque parentum.
 Tum porro quoniam est extremum quodque cacumen
 600 corporis illius, quod nostri cernere sensus
 iam nequeunt, id ni mirum sine partibus extat

[557] and therefore that which the long, the infinite duration of all bygone time had broken up demolished and destroyed, could never be reproduced in all remaining time.

But now sure enough a fixed limit to their breaking has been set, since we see each thing renewed, and at the same time definite periods fixed for things

each after its kind to reach the flower of their age.

Moreover while the bodies of matter are most solid, it may yet be explained in what way all things which are formed soft, as air water earth fires, are so formed and by what force they severally go on, since once for all there is void mixed up in things.

But on the other hand if the first-beginnings of things be soft, it cannot be explained out of what enduring basalt and iron can be produced; for their whole nature will utterly lack a first foundation to begin with.

First-beginnings therefore are strong in solid singleness, and by a denser combination of these all things can be closely packed and exhibit enduring strength.

Again if no limit has been set to the breaking of bodies, nevertheless the several bodies which go to things must survive from eternity up to the present time, not yet assailed by any danger.

But since they are possessed of a frail nature, it is not consistent with this that they could have continued through eternity harassed through ages by countless blows.

Again too since a limit of growing and sustaining life has been assigned to things each after its kind, and since by the laws of nature it stands decreed what they can each do and what they cannot do, and since nothing is changed, but all things are so constant that the different birds all in succession exhibit in their body the distinctive marks of their kind, they must sure enough have a body of unchangeable matter also.

For if the first-beginnings of things could in any way be vanquished and changed, it would then be uncertain too what could and what could not rise into being, in short on what principle each thing has its powers defined, its deep-set boundary mark; nor could the generations reproduce so often each after its kind the nature habits, way of life and motions of the parents.

Then again since there is ever a bounding point [to bodies, which appears to us to be a least, there ought in the same way to be a bounding point the least conceivable to that first body] which already is beyond what our senses can perceive: that point sure enough is without parts and consists of a least nature and never has existed apart by itself and will not be able in future so to exist, since it is in itself a part of that other;

et minima constat natura nec fuit umquam
per se secretum neque post hac esse valebit,
alterius quoniamst ipsum pars primaque et una,
605 inde aliae atque aliae similes ex ordine partes
agmine condenso naturam corporis explent;
quae quoniam per se nequeunt constare, necessest
haerere unde queant nulla ratione revelli.
sunt igitur solida primordia simplicitate,
610 quae minimis stipata cohaerent partibus arte.

non ex illorum conventu conciliata,
 sed magis aeterna pollentia simplicitate,
 unde neque avelli quicquam neque deminui iam
 concedit natura reservans semina rebus.
 615 Praeterea nisi erit minimum, parvissima quaeque
 corpora constabunt ex partibus infinitis,
 quippe ubi dimidiaie partis pars semper habebit
 dimidiam partem nec res praefiniet ulla.
 ergo rerum inter summam minimamque quod escit,
 620 nil erit ut distet; nam quamvis funditus omnis
 summa sit infinita, tamen, parvissima quae sunt,
 ex infinitis constabunt partibus aequae.
 quod quoniam ratio reclamat vera negatque
 credere posse animum, victus fateare necessest
 625 esse ea quae nullis iam praedita partibus extent
 et minima constant natura. quae quoniam sunt,
 illa quoque esse tibi solida atque aeterna fatendum.
 Denique si minimas in partis cuncta resolvi
 cogere consuesset rerum natura creatrix,
 630 iam nihil ex illis eadem reparare valeret
 propterea quia, quae nullis sunt partibus aucta,
 non possunt ea quae debet genitalis habere
 materies, varios conexus pondera plagas
 concursus motus, per quas res quaeque geruntur.
 635 Quapropter qui materiem rerum esse putarunt
 ignem atque ex igni summam consistere solo,
 magno opere a vera lapsi ratione videntur.
 Heraclitus init quorum dux proelia primus,
 clarus ob obscuram linguam magis inter inanis
 640 quamde gravis inter Graios, qui vera requirunt;
 omnia enim stolidi magis admirantur amantque,
 inversis quae sub verbis latitantia cernunt,
 veraque constituunt quae belle tangere possunt
 auris et lepido quae sunt fucata sonore.
 645 Nam cur tam variae res possent esse, requiro,
 ex uno si sunt igni puroque creatae?

[602] and so a first and single part and then other and other similar parts in succession fill up in close serried mass the nature of the first body; and since these cannot exist by themselves, they must cleave to that from which they cannot in any way be torn.

First-beginnings therefore are of solid singleness, massed together and cohering closely by means of least parts, not compounded out of a union of those parts, but, rather, strong in everlasting singleness.

From them nature allows nothing to be torn, nothing further to be worn away, reserving them as seeds for things.

Again unless there shall be a least, the very smallest bodies will consist of infinite parts, inasmuch as the half of the half will always have a half and nothing will set bounds to the division.

Therefore between the sum of things and the least of things what difference will there be? There will be no distinction at all; for how absolutely infinite soever the whole sum is, yet the things which are smallest will equally consist of infinite parts.

Now since on this head true reason protests and denies that the mind can believe it, you must yield and admit that there exist such things as are possessed of no parts and are of a least nature.

And since these exist, those first bodies also you must admit to be solid and everlasting.

Once more, if nature, creatress of things, had been wont to compel all things to be broken up into least parts, then too she would be unable to reproduce anything out of those parts, because those things which are enriched with no parts cannot have the properties which begetting matter ought to have, I mean the various entanglements, weights, blows, clashings, motions, by means of which things severally go on.

For which reasons they who have held fire to be the matter of things and the sum to be formed out of fire alone, are seen to have strayed most widely from true reason.

At the head of whom enters Heraclitus to do battle, famous for obscurity more among the frivolous than the earnest Greeks who seek the truth.

For fools admire and like all things the more which they perceive to be concealed under involved language, and determine things to be true which can prettily tickle the ears and are varnished over with finely sounding phrase.

For I want to know how things can be so various, if they are formed out of fire one and unmixed:

nil prodesset enim calidum denserier ignem
nec rare fieri, si partes ignis eandem
naturam quam totus habet super ignis haberent.

650 acrior ardor enim conductis partibus esset,
languidior porro disiectis disque supatis.
amplius hoc fieri nihil est quod posse rearis
talibus in causis, ne dum variantia rerum
tanta queat densis rarisque ex ignibus esse.

655 Id quoque: si faciant admixtum rebus inane,
denseri poterunt ignes rarique relinqui;
sed quia multa sibi cernunt contraria quae sint
et fugitant in rebus inane relinquere purum,
ardua dum metuunt, amittunt vera viai

660 nec rursus cernunt exempto rebus inane
omnia denseri fierique ex omnibus unum
corpus, nil ab se quod possit mittere raptim,
aestifer ignis uti lumen iacit atque vaporem,
ut videas non e stipatis partibus esse.

665 Quod si forte alia credunt ratione potesse
ignis in coetu stingui mutareque corpus,
scilicet ex nulla facere id si parte reparcent,

occidet ad nihilum ni mirum funditus ardor
omnis et e nihilo fient quae cumque creantur;

670 nam quod cumque suis mutatum finibus exit,
continuo hoc mors est illius quod fuit ante.

proinde aliquid superare necesse est incolume ollis,
ne tibi res redeant ad nilum funditus omnes
de nihiloque renata vigescat copia rerum.

675 Nunc igitur quoniam certissima corpora quaedam
sunt, quae conservant naturam semper eandem,
quorum habitu aut aditu mutatoque ordine mutant
naturam res et convertunt corpora sese,
scire licet non esse haec ignea corpora rerum.

680 nil referret enim quaedam decedere, abire
atque alia adtribui mutarique ordine quaedam,
si tamen ardoris naturam cuncta tenerent;
ignis enim foret omnimodis quod cumque crearet.
verum, ut opinor, itast: sunt quaedam corpora, quorum

685 concursus motus ordo positura figurae
efficiunt ignis mutatoque ordine mutant
naturam neque sunt igni simulata neque ulli
praeterea rei quae corpora mittere possit
sensibus et nostros adiectu tangere tactus.

690 dicere porro ignem res omnis esse neque ullam

[647] it would avail nothing for hot fire to be condensed or rarefied, if the same nature which the whole fire has belonged to the parts of fire as well.

The heat would be more intense by compression of parts, more faint by their severance and dispersion.

More than this you cannot think it in the power of such causes to effect, far less could so great a diversity of things come from mere density and rarity of fires.

Observe also, if they suppose void to be mixed up in things, fire may then be condensed and left rare; but because they see many things rise up in contradiction to them and shrink from leaving unmixed void in things, fearing the steep, they lose the true road, and do not perceive on the other hand that if void is taken from things, all things are condensed and, out of all things is

formed one single body, which cannot briskly radiate anything from it, in the way heat-giving fire emits light and warmth, letting you see that it is not of closely compressed parts.

But if they haply think that in some other way fires maybe quenched in the union and change their body, you are to know that if they shall scruple on no side to do this, all heat sure enough will be utterly brought to nothing, and all things that are produced will be formed out of nothing.

For whenever a thing changes and quits its proper limits, at once this change of state is the death of that which was before.

Therefore something or other must needs be left to those fires of theirs undestroyed, that you may not have all things absolutely returning to nothing, and the whole store of things born anew and flourishing out of nothing.

Since then in fact there are some most unquestionable bodies which always preserve the same nature, on whose going or coming and change of order things change their nature and bodies are transformed, you are to know that these first bodies of things are not of fire.

For it would matter nothing that some should withdraw and go away and others should be added on and some should have their order changed, if one and all they yet retained the nature of heat; for whatever they produced would be altogether fire.

But thus methinks it is: there are certain bodies whose clashings, motions, order, position, and shapes produce fires, and which by a change of, order change the nature of the things and do not resemble fire nor anything else which has the power of sending bodies to our senses and touching by its contact our sense of touch.

Again to say that all things are fire and that no real thing except fire exists in the number of things, as this same man does, appears to be sheer dotage.

rem veram in numero rerum constare nisi ignem,
quod facit hic idem, perdelirum esse videtur.
nam contra sensus ab sensibus ipse repugnat
et labefactat eos, unde omnia credita pendent,
695 unde hic cognitus est ipsi quem nominat ignem;
credit enim sensus ignem cognoscere vere,
cetera non credit, quae nilo clara minus sunt.
quod mihi cum vanum tum delirum esse videtur;
quo referemus enim? quid nobis certius ipsis
700 sensibus esse potest, qui vera ac falsa notemus?
Praeterea quare quisquam magis omnia tollat
et velit ardoris naturam linquere solam,
quam neget esse ignis, aliam tamen esse relinquat?
aequa videtur enim dementia dicere utrumque.
705 Quapropter qui materiem rerum esse putarunt
ignem atque ex igni summam consistere posse,

et qui principium gignundis aera rebus
constituere aut umorem qui cumque putarunt
fingere res ipsum per se terramve creare
710 omnia et in rerum naturas vertier omnis,
magno opere a vero longe derrasse videntur.
adde etiam qui conduplicant primordia rerum
aera iungentes igni terramque liquori,
et qui quattuor ex rebus posse omnia rentur
715 ex igni terra atque anima procreescere et imbri.
quorum Acragatinus cum primis Empedocles est,
insula quem triquetris terrarum gessit in oris,
quam fluitans circum magnis anfractibus aequor
Ionium glaucis aspargit virus ab undis
720 angustoque fretu rapidum mare dividit undis
Aeoliae terrarum oras a finibus eius.
hic est vasta Charybdis et hic Aetnaea minantur
murmura flammarum rursum se colligere iras,
faucibus eruptos iterum vis ut vomat ignis
725 ad caelumque ferat flammai fulgura rursum.
quae cum magna modis multis miranda videtur
gentibus humanis regio visendaque fertur
rebus opima bonis, multa munita virum vi,
nil tamen hoc habuisse viro praeclarius in se
730 nec sanctum magis et mirum carumque videtur.
carmina quin etiam divini pectoris eius
vociferantur et exponunt praeclara reperta,
ut vix humana videatur stirpe creatus.

[691] For he himself takes his stand on the side of the senses to fight against the senses and shakes their authority, on which rests all our belief, ay from which this fire as he calls it is known to himself; for he believes that the senses can truly perceive fire, he does not believe they can perceive all other things which are not a whit less clear.

Now this appears to me to be as false as it is foolish; for to what shall we appeal? What surer test can we have than the senses, whereby to note truth and falsehood? Again why should any one rather abolish all things and choose to leave the single nature of heat, than deny that fires exist, while he allows any thing else to be? It seems to be equal madness to affirm either this or that.

For these reasons they who have held that fire is the matter of things and that the sum can be formed out of fire, and they who have determined air to be the first-beginning in begetting things, and all who have held that water by itself alone forms things, or that earth produces all things and changes into all the different natures of things, appear to have strayed exceedingly wide of the truth; as well as they who make the first-beginnings of things twofold

coupling air with fire and earth with water, and they who believe that all things grow out of four things, fire earth and air and water.

Chief of whom is Agrigentine Empedocles: him within the three-cornered shores of its lands that island bore, about which the Ionian sea flows in large crankings, and splashes up brine from its green waves.

Here the sea racing in its straitened froth divides by its waters the shores of Italia's lands from the other's coasts; here is wasteful Charybdis and here the rumblings of Aetna threaten anew to gather up such fury of flames, as again with force to belch forth the fires bursting from its throat and carry up to heaven once more the lightnings of flame.

Now though this great country is seen to deserve in many ways the wonder of mankind and is held to be well worth visiting, rich in all good things, guarded by large force of men, yet seems it to have held within it nothing more glorious than this man, nothing more holy marvelous and dear.

The verses too of his godlike genius cry with a loud voice and set forth in such wise his glorious discoveries that he hardly seems born of a mortal stock.

Hic tamen et supra quos diximus inferiores

⁷³⁵ partibus egregie multis multoque minores,
quamquam multa bene ac divinitus invenientes
ex adyto tam quam cordis responsa dedere
sanctius et multo certa ratione magis quam
Pythia quae tripodi a Phoebi lauroque profatur,
⁷⁴⁰ principiis tamen in rerum fecere ruinas
et graviter magni magno cecidere ibi casu.

Primum quod motus exempto rebus inani
constituunt et res mollis rarasque relinquunt
aera solem ignem terras animalia frugis
⁷⁴⁵ nec tamen admiscent in eorum corpus inane;
deinde quod omnino finem non esse secandis
corporibus facient neque pausam stare fragori
nec prorsum in rebus minimum consistere quicquam,
cum videamus id extremum cuiusque cacumen
⁷⁵⁰ esse quod ad sensus nostros minimum esse videtur,
conicere ut possis ex hoc, quae cernere non quis
extremum quod habent, minimum consistere rerum.

Huc accedit item, quoniam primordia rerum
mollia constituunt, quae nos nativa videmus
⁷⁵⁵ esse et mortali cum corpore, funditus ut qui
debeat ad nihilum iam rerum summa reverti
de nihiloque renata vigescere copia rerum;
quorum utrumque quid a vero iam distet habebis.

Deinde inimica modis multis sunt atque veneno
⁷⁶⁰ ipsa sibi inter se; quare aut congressa peribunt

aut ita diffugient, ut tempestate coacta
fulmina diffugere atque imbris ventosque videmus.
Denique quattuor ex rebus si cuncta creantur
atque in eas rursum res omnia dissoluuntur,
765 qui magis illa queunt rerum primordia dici
quam contra res illorum retroque putari?
alternis gignuntur enim mutantque colorem
et totam inter se naturam tempore ab omni.
fulmina diffugere atque imbris ventosque videmus.
770 sin ita forte putas ignis terraeque coire
corpus et aerias auras roremque liquoris,
nil in concilio naturam ut mutet eorum,
nulla tibi ex illis poterit res esse creata,
non animans, non exanimo cum corpore, ut arbos;
775 quippe suam quicque in coetu variantis acervi
naturam ostendet mixtusque videbitur aer
cum terra simul et quodam cum rore manere.
at primordia gignundis in rebus oportet
naturam clandestinam caecamque adhibere,
780 emineat ne quid, quod contra pugnet et obstat
quo minus esse queat proprie quodcumque creatur.

[734] Yet he and those whom we have mentioned above immeasurably inferior and far beneath him, although the authors of many excellent and godlike discoveries, they have given responses from so to say their hearts' holy of holies with more sanctity and on much more grounds than the Pythia who speaks out from the tripod and laurel of Phoebus, have yet gone to ruin in the first-beginnings of things: it is there they have fallen, and, great themselves, great and heavy has been that fall; first because they have banished void from things and yet assign to them motions, and allow things soft and rare, air sun fire earth, living things and corn, and yet mix not up void in their body; next because they suppose that there is no limit to the division of bodies and no stop set to their breaking and that there exists no least at all in things; though we see that that is the bounding point of any thing which seems to be least to our senses, so that from this you may infer that because the things which you do not see have a bounding point, there is a least in them.

Moreover since they assign soft first-beginnings of things, which we see to have birth and to be of a body altogether mortal, the sum of things must in that case revert to nothing and the store of things be born anew and flourish out of nothing: how wide now of the truth both these doctrines are you will already comprehend.

In the next place these bodies are in many ways mutually hostile and poisonous; and therefore they will either perish when they have met, or will

fly asunder just as we see, when a storm has gathered, lightnings and rains and winds fly asunder.

Again if all things are produced from four things and all again broken up into those things, how can they be called first-beginnings of things any more than things be called their first-beginnings, the supposition being reversed? For they are begotten time about and interchange color and their whole nature without ceasing.

But if haply you suppose that the body of fire and of earth and air and the moisture of water meet in such a way that none of them in the union changes its nature, no thing I tell you can be then produced out of them, neither living thing nor thing with inanimate body, as a tree; in fact each thing amid the medley of this discordant mass will display its own nature and air will be seen to be mixed up with earth and heat to remain in union with moisture.

But first-beginnings ought in begetting things to bring with them a latent and unseen nature in order that no thing stand out, to be in the way and prevent whatever is produced from having its own proper being.

Quin etiam repetunt a caelo atque ignibus eius
et primum faciunt ignem se vertere in auras
aeris, hinc imbrem gigni terramque creari
785 ex imbri retroque a terra cuncta reverti,
umorem primum, post aera, deinde calorem,
nec cessare haec inter se mutare, meare
a caelo ad terram, de terra ad sidera mundi.
quod facere haud ullo debent primordia pacto.
790 immutabile enim quiddam superare necessest,
ne res ad nihilum redigantur funditus omnes;
nam quod cumque suis mutatum finibus exit,
continuo hoc mors est illius quod fuit ante.
quapropter quoniam quae paulo diximus ante
795 in commutatum veniunt, constare necessest
ex aliis ea, quae nequeant convertier usquam,
ne tibi res redeant ad nilum funditus omnis;
quin potius tali natura praedita quaedam
corpora constituas, ignem si forte crearint,
800 posse eadem demptis paucis paucisque tributis,
ordine mutato et motu, facere aeris auras,
sic alias aliis rebus mutarier omnis?
'At manifesta palam res indicat' inquis 'in auras
aeris e terra res omnis crescere alique;
805 et nisi tempestas indulget tempore fausto
imbribus, ut tabe nimborum arbusta vacillent,
solque sua pro parte fovet tribuitque calorem,
crescere non possint fruges arbusta animantis.'

scilicet et nisi nos cibus aridus et tener umor
810 adiuuet, amisso iam corpore vita quoque omnis
omnibus e nervis atque ossibus exsoluatur;
adiutamur enim dubio procul atque alimur nos
certis ab rebus, certis aliae atque aliae res.
ni mirum quia multa modis communia multis
815 multarum rerum in rebus primordia mixta
sunt, ideo variis variae res rebus aluntur.
atque eadem magni refert primordia saepe
cum quibus et quali positura contineantur
et quos inter se dent motus accipiantque;
820 namque eadem caelum mare terras flumina solem
constituunt, eadem fruges arbusta animantis,
verum aliis alioque modo commixta moventur.

[780] Moreover they go back to heaven and its fires for a beginning, and first suppose that fire changes into air, next that from air water is begotten and earth is produced out of water, and that all in reverse order come back from earth, water first, next air, then heat, and that these cease not to interchange, to pass from heaven to earth, from earth to the stars of ether.

All which first-beginnings must on no account do; since something unchangeable must needs remain over, that things may not utterly be brought back to nothing.

For whenever a thing changes and quits its proper limits, at once this change of state is the death of that which was before.

Wherefore since those things which we have mentioned a little before pass into a state of change, they must be formed out of others which cannot in any case be transformed, that you may not have things returning altogether to nothing.

Why not rather hold that there are certain bodies possessed of such a nature, that, if they have haply produced fire, the same may, after a few have been taken away and a few added on and the order and motion changed, produce air; and that all other things may in the same way interchange with one another? "But plain matter of fact clearly proves" you say "that all things grow up into the air and are fed out of the earth; and unless the season at the propitious period send such abundant showers that the trees reel beneath the soaking storms of rain, and unless the sun on its part foster them and supply heat, corn, trees and living things could not grow."

Quite true, and unless solid food and soft water should recruit us, our substance would waste away and life break wholly up out of all the sinews and bones; for we beyond doubt are recruited and fed by certain things, this and that other thing by certain other things.

Because many first-beginnings common to many things in many ways are mixed up in things, therefore sure enough different things are fed by different

things.

And it often makes a great difference with what things and in what position the same first beginnings are held in union and what motions they mutually impart and receive; for the same make up heaven sea lands rivers sun, the same make up corn trees and living things; but they are mixed up with different things and in different ways as they move.

quin etiam passim nostris in versibus ipsis
multa elementa vides multis communia verbis,
825 cum tamen inter se versus ac verba necessest
confiteare et re et sonitu distare sonanti.
tantum elementa queunt permutato ordine solo;
at rerum quae sunt primordia, plura adhibere
possunt unde queant variae res quaeque creari.
830 Nunc et Anaxagorae scrutemur homoeomerian
quam Grai memorant nec nostra dicere lingua
concedit nobis patrii sermonis egestas,
sed tamen ipsam rem facilest exponere verbis.
principio, rerum quam dicit homoeomerian,
835 ossa videlicet e pauxillis atque minutis
ossibus hic et de pauxillis atque minutis
visceribus viscus gigni sanguenque creari
sanguinis inter se multis coeuntibus guttis
ex aurique putat micis consistere posse
840 aurum et de terris terram concreescere parvis,
ignibus ex ignis, umorem umoribus esse,
cetera consimili fingit ratione putatque.
nec tamen esse ulla de parte in rebus inane
concedit neque corporibus finem esse secandis.
845 quare in utraque mihi pariter ratione videtur
errare atque illi, supra quos diximus ante.
Adde quod inbecilla nimis primordia fingit;
si primordia sunt, simili quae praedita constant
natura atque ipsae res sunt aequaeque laborant
850 et pereunt, neque ab exitio res ulla refrenat.
nam quid in oppressu valido durabit eorum,
ut mortem effugiat, leti sub dentibus ipsis?
ignis anumor an aura? quid horum? sanguen an ossa?
nil ut opinor, ubi ex aequo res funditus omnis
855 tam mortalis erit quam quae manifesta videmus
ex oculis nostris aliqua vi victa perire.
at neque reccidere ad nihilum res posse neque autem
crescere de nihilo testor res ante probatas.
Praeterea quoniam cibus auget corpus alitque,

sive cibos omnis commixto corpore dicent
 esse et habere in se nervorum corpora parva
 ossaque et omnino venas partisque cruoris,
 fiet uti cibus omnis et aridus et liquor ipse
 865 ex alienigenis rebus constare putetur,
 ossibus et nervis sanieque et sanguine mixto.

[823] Nay you see throughout even in these verses of ours many elements common to many words, though you must needs admit that the lines and words differ one from the other both in meaning and in sound wherewith they sound.

So much can elements effect by a mere change of order; but those elements which are the first-beginnings of things can bring with them more combinations out of which different things can severally be produced.

Let us now also examine the homoeomeria of Anaxagoras as the Greeks term it, which the poverty of our native speech does not allow us to name in our own tongue; though it is easy enough to set forth in words the thing itself.

First of all then, when he speaks of the homoeomeria of things, you must know he supposes bones to be formed out of very small and minute bones and flesh of very small and minute flesh and blood by the coming together of many drops of blood, and gold he thinks can be composed of grains of gold and earth be a concretion of small earths, and fires can come from fires and water from waters, and everything else he fancies and supposes to be produced on a like principle.

And yet at the same time he does not allow that void exists anywhere in things, or that there is a limit to the division of things.

Wherefore he appears to me on both these grounds to be as much mistaken as those whom we have already spoken of above.

Moreover, the first-beginnings which he supposes are too frail; if first-beginnings they be which are possessed of a nature like to the things themselves and are just as liable to suffering and death, and which nothing reins back from destruction.

For which of them will hold out, so as to escape death, beneath so strong a pressure within the very jaws of destruction? Fire or water or air? Which of these? Blood or bones?

Not one methinks, where everything will be just as essentially mortal as those things which we see with the senses' perish before our eyes vanquished by some force.

But I appeal to facts demonstrated above for proof that things cannot fall away to nothing nor on the other hand grow from nothing.

Again since food gives increase and nourishment to the body, you are to

know that our veins and blood and bones [and the like are formed of things foreign to them in kind]; or if they shall say that all foods are of a mixed body and contain in them small bodies of sinews and bones and veins as well and particles of blood, it will follow that all food, solid as well as liquid, must be held to be composed of things foreign to them in kind, of bones that is and sinews and matter and blood mixed up.

Praeterea quae cumque e terra corpora crescunt,
si sunt in terris, terram constare necessest
ex alienigenis, quae terris exoriuntur.

870 transfer item, totidem verbis utare licebit:
in lignis si flamma latet fumusque cinisque,
ex alienigenis consistant ligna necessest,
praeterea tellus quae corpora cumque alit auget
ex alienigenis, quae lignis exoriuntur.

875 Linquitur hic quaedam latitandi copia tenvis,
id quod Anaxagoras sibi sumit, ut omnibus omnis
res putet inmixtas rebus latitare, sed illud
apparere unum, cuius sint plurima mixta
et magis in promptu primaque in fronte locata.

880 quod tamen a vera longe ratione repulsumst;
conveniebat enim fruges quoque saepe, minaci
robore cum in saxi franguntur, mittere signum
sanguinis aut aliquid, nostro quae corpore aluntur.
cum lapidi in lapidem terimus, manare cruorem

885 consimili ratione herbis quoque saepe decebat,
et latices dulcis guttas similique sapore
mittere, lanigeras quali sunt ubere lactis,
scilicet et glebis terrarum saepe friatis
herbarum genera et fruges frondesque videri

890 dispertita inter terram latitare minute,
postremo in lignis cinerem fumumque videri,
cum prae fracta forent, ignisque latere minutos.
quorum nil fieri quoniam manifesta docet res,
scire licet non esse in rebus res ita mixtas,

895 verum semina multimodis inmixta latere
multarum rerum in rebus communia debent.

‘At saepe in magnis fit montibus’ inquis ‘ut altis
arboribus vicina cacumina summa terantur
inter se validis facere id cogentibus austris,
donec flammai fulserunt flore coorto.’

900 scilicet et non est lignis tamen insitus ignis,
verum semina sunt ardoris multa, terendo
quae cum confluxere, creant incendia silvis.

[865] Again if all the bodies which grow out of the earth, are in the earths, the earth must be composed of things foreign to it in kind which grow out of these earths.

Apply again this reasoning to other things, and you may use just the same words.

If flame and smoke and ash are latent in woods, woods must necessarily be composed of things foreign to them in kind.

Again all those bodies, to which the earth gives food, it increases [out of things foreign to them in kind which rise out of the earth: thus too the bodies of flame which issue from the woods, are fed] out of things foreign to them in kind which rise out of these woods.

Here some slight opening is left for evasion, which Anaxagoras avails himself of, choosing to suppose that all things though latent are mixed up in things, and that is alone visible of which there are the largest number of bodies in the mixture and these more ready to hand and stationed in the first rank.

This however is far banished from true reason.

For then it were natural that corn too should often, when crushed by the formidable force of the stone, show some mark of blood or some other of the things which have their nourishment in our body.

For like reasons it were fitting that from grasses too, when we rub them between two stones, blood should ooze out; that waters should yield sweet drops, in flavor like to the udder of milk in sheep; yes and that often, when clods of earth have been crumbled, kinds of grasses and corn and leaves should be found to lurk distributed among the earth in minute quantities; and lastly that ash and smoke and minute fires should be found latent in woods, when they were broken off.

Now since plain matter of fact teaches that none of these results follows, you are to know that things are not so mixed up in things; but rather seeds common to many things must in many ways be mixed up and latent in things.

“But it often comes to pass on high mountains” you say “that contiguous tops of tall trees rub together, the strong south winds constraining them so to do, until the flower of flame has broken out and they have burst into a blaze.”

Quite true, and yet fire is not innate in woods; but there are many seeds of heat, and when they by rubbing have streamed together, they produce conflagrations in the forests.

quod si facta foret silvis abscondita flamma,
905 non possent ullum tempus celarier ignes,
conficerent volgo silvas, arbusta cremarent.
iamne vides igitur, paulo quod diximus ante,
permagni referre eadem primordia saepe
cum quibus et quali positura contineantur
910 et quos inter se dent motus accipiantque,

atque eadem paulo inter se mutata creare
 ignes et lignum? quo pacto verba quoque ipsa
 inter se paulo mutatis sunt elementis,
 cum ligna atque ignes distincta voce notemus.
 915 Denique iam quae cumque in rebus cernis apertis
 si fieri non posse putas, quin materiai
 corpora consimili natura praedita fingas,
 hac ratione tibi pereunt primordia rerum:
 fiet uti risu tremulo concussa cachinnent
 920 et lacrimis salsis umectent ora genasque.
 Nunc age, quod super est, cognosce et clarius audi.
 nec me animi fallit quam sint obscura; sed acri
 percussit thyrsos laudis spes magna meum cor
 et simul incussit suavem mi in pectus amorem
 925 Musarum, quo nunc instinctus mente vigenti
 avia Pieridum peragro loca nullius ante
 trita solo. iuvat integros accedere fontis
 atque haurire iuvatque novos decerpere flores
 insignemque meo capiti petere inde coronam,
 930 unde prius nulli velarint tempora Musae;
 primum quod magnis doceo de rebus et artis
 religionum animum nodis exsolvere pergo,
 deinde quod obscura de re tam lucida pango
 carmina musaeo contingens cuncta lepore.
 935 id quoque enim non ab nulla ratione videtur;
 sed vel uti pueris absinthia taetra medentes
 cum dare conantur, prius oras pocula circum
 contingunt mellis dulci flavoque liquore,
 ut puerorum aetas improvida ludificetur
 940 laborum tenuis, interea perpotet amarum
 absinthii laticem deceptaque non capiatur,
 sed potius tali facto recreata valescat,
 sic ego nunc, quoniam haec ratio plerumque videtur

[904] But if the flame was stored up ready made in the forests, the fire could not be concealed for any length of time, but would destroy forests, burn up trees indiscriminately.

Do you now see, as we said a little before, that it often makes a very great difference with what things and in what position the same first beginnings are held in union and what motions they mutually impart and receive, and that the same may, when a little changed in arrangement produce say fires and a fir?

Just as the words too consist of elements only a little changed in arrangement, though we denote firs and fires with two quite distinct names.

Once again, if you suppose that whatever you perceive among visible

things cannot be produced without imagining bodies of matter possessed of a like nature, in this way you will find the first-beginnings of things are destroyed: it will come to this that they will be shaken by loud fits of convulsive laughter and will bedew with salt tears face and cheeks.

Now mark and learn what remains to be known and hear it more distinctly.

Nor does my mind fail to perceive how dark the things are; but the great hope of praise has smitten my heart with sharp thyrsus, and at the same time has struck into my breast sweet love of the muses, with which now inspired I traverse in blooming thought the pathless haunts of the Pierides never yet trodden by sole of man.

I love to approach the untasted springs and to quaff, I love to cull fresh flowers and gather for my head a distinguished crown from spots whence the muses have yet veiled the brows of none; first because I teach of great things and essay to release the mind from the fast bonds of religious scruples, and next because on a dark subject I pen such lucid verses overlaying all with the muses' charm.

For that too would seem to be not without good grounds: just as physicians when they purpose to give nauseous wormwood to children, first smear the rim round the bowl with the sweet yellow juice of honey, that the unthinking age of children may be fooled as far as the lips, and meanwhile drink up the bitter draught of wormwood and though beguiled yet not be betrayed, but rather by such means recover health and strength; so I now, since this doctrine seems generally somewhat bitter to those by whom it has not been handled, and the multitude shrinks back from it in dismay, have resolved to set forth to you our doctrine in sweet-toned Pierian verse and overlay it as it were with the pleasant honey of the muses, if haply by such means I might engage your mind on my verses, till you clearly perceive the whole nature of things, its shape and frame.

tristior esse quibus non est tractata, retroque
945 volgus abhorret ab hac, volui tibi suaviloquenti
carmine Pierio rationem exponere nostram
et quasi musaeo dulci contingere melle,
si tibi forte animum tali ratione tenere
versibus in nostris possem, dum perspicis omnem
950 naturam rerum, qua constet compta figura.
Sed quoniam docui solidissima materiai
corpora perpetuo volitare invicta per aevom,
nunc age, summai quaedam sit finis eorum
necne sit, evolvamus; item quod inane repertumst
955 seu locus ac spatium, res in quo quaeque gerantur,
pervideamus utrum finitum funditus omne
constet an immensum pateat vasteque profundum.
Omne quod est igitur nulla regione viarum

finitumst; namque extremum debebat habere.
960 extremum porro nullius posse videtur
esse, nisi ultra sit quod finiat, ut videatur
quo non longius haec sensus natura sequatur.
nunc extra summam quoniam nihil esse fatendum,
non habet extremum, caret ergo fine modoque.
965 nec refert quibus adsistas regionibus eius;
usque adeo, quem quisque locum possedit, in omnis
tantundem partis infinitum omne relinquit.
Praeterea si iam finitum constituatur
omne quod est spatium, si quis procurrat ad oras
970 ultimus extremas iaciatque volatile telum,
id validis utrum contortum viribus ire
quo fuerit missum mavis longeque volare,
an prohibere aliquid censes obstareque posse?
alterutrum fatearis enim sumasque necessest.
975 quorum utrumque tibi effugium praecludit et omne
cogit ut exempta concedas fine patere.
nam sive est aliquid quod probeat efficiatque
quo minus quo missum est veniat finique locet se,
sive foras fertur, non est a fine profectum.
980 hoc pacto sequar atque, oras ubi cumque locaris
extremas, quaeram: quid telo denique fiet?
fiet uti nusquam possit consistere finis
effugiumque fugae prolatet copia semper.
Praeterea spatium summai totius omne
985 undique si inclusum certis consisteret oris
finitumque foret, iam copia materialia
undique ponderibus solidis confluet ad imum
nec res ulla geri sub caeli tegmine posset

[948] But since I have taught that most solid bodies of matter fly about for ever unvanquished through all time, mark now, let us unfold whether there is or is not any limit to their sum; likewise let us clearly see whether that which has been found to be void, or room and space, in which things severally go on, is all of it altogether finite or stretches without limits and to an unfathomable depth.

Well then, the existing universe is bounded in none of its dimensions; for then it must have had an outside.

Again it is seen that there can be an outside of nothing, unless there be something beyond to bound it, so that that is seen, farther than which the nature of this our sense does not follow the thing.

Now since we must admit that there is nothing outside the sum, it has no outside, and therefore is without end and limit.

And it matters not in which of its regions you take your stand; so invariably, whatever position any one has taken up, he leaves the universe just as infinite as before in all directions.

Again if for the moment all existing space be held to be bounded, supposing a man runs forward to its outside borders, and stands on the utmost verge and then throws a winged javelin, do you choose that when hurled with vigorous force it shall advance to the point to which it has been sent and fly to a distance, or do you decide that something can get in its way and stop it?

For you must admit and adopt one of the two suppositions; either of which shuts you out from all escape and compels you to grant that the universe stretches without end.

For whether there is something to get in its way and prevent its coming whither it was sent and placing itself in the point intended, or whether it is carried forward, in either case it has not started from the end.

In this way I will go on and, wherever you have placed the outside borders, I will ask what then becomes of the javelin.

The result will be that an end can nowhere be fixed, and that the room given for flight will still prolong the power of flight.

Lastly one thing is seen by the eyes to end another thing; air bounds off hills, and mountains air, earth limits sea and sea again all lands; the universe however there is nothing outside to end.

nec foret omnino caelum neque lumina solis,
990 quippe ubi materies omnis cumulata iaceret
ex infinito iam tempore subsidendo.
at nunc ni mirum requies data principiorum
corporibus nullast, quia nil est funditus imum,
quo quasi confluere et sedes ubi ponere possint.
995 semper in adsiduo motu res quaeque geruntur
partibus in cunctis, infernaque suppeditantur
ex infinito cita corpora materiai.
Postremo ante oculos res rem finire videtur;
aer dissaepit collis atque aera montes,
1000 terra mare et contra mare terras terminat omnis;
omne quidem vero nihil est quod finiat extra.
est igitur natura loci spatiumque profundi,
quod neque clara suo percurrere fulmina cursu
perpetuo possint aevi labentia tractu
1005 nec prorsum facere ut restet minus ire meando;
usque adeo passim patet ingens copia rebus
finibus exemptis in cunctas undique partis.
Ipsa modum porro sibi rerum summa parare
ne possit, natura tenet, quae corpus inane
1010 et quod inane autem est finiri corpore cogit,

ut sic alternis infinita omnia reddat,
aut etiam alterutrum, nisi terminet alterum eorum,
simplice natura pateat tamen inmoderatum,
nec mare nec tellus neque caeli lucida templa
1015 nec mortale genus nec divum corpora sancta
exiguum possent horai sistere tempus;
nam dispulsa suo de coetu materiai
copia ferretur magnum per inane soluta,
sive adeo potius numquam concreta creasset
1020 ullam rem, quoniam cogi disiecta nequisset.
nam certe neque consilio primordia rerum
ordine se suo quaeque sagaci mente locarunt
nec quos quaeque darent motus pepigere profecto
sed quia multa modis multis mutata per omne
1025 ex infinito vexantur percita plagis,
omne genus motus et coetus experiundo
tandem deveniunt in talis disposituras,
qualibus haec rerum consistit summa creata,
et multos etiam magnos servata per annos
1030 ut semel in motus coniectast convenientis,
efficit ut largis avidum mare fluminis undis
integrent amnes et solis terra vapore
fota novet fetus summissaque gens animantum
floreat et vivant labentis aetheris ignes.

[989] Again if all the space of the whole sum were enclosed within fixed borders and were bounded, in that case the store of matter by its solid weights would have streamed together from all sides to the lowest point nor could anything have gone on under the canopy of heaven, no nor would there have been a heaven nor sunlight at all, inasmuch as all matter, settling down through infinite time past, would lie together in a heap.

But as it is, sure enough no rest is given to the bodies of the first-beginnings, because there is no lowest point at all, to which they might stream together as it were, and where they might take up their positions.

All things are ever going on in ceaseless motion on all sides and bodies of matter stirred to action are supplied from beneath out of infinite space.

Therefore the nature of room and the space of the unfathomable void are such as bright thunderbolts cannot race through in their course though gliding on through endless tract of time, no nor lessen one jot the journey that remains to go by all their travel: so huge a room is spread out on all sides for things without any bounds in all directions round.

Again nature keeps the sum of things from setting any limit to itself, since she compels body to be ended by void and void in turn by body, so that either she thus renders the universe infinite by this alternation of the two, or else the

one of the two, in case the other does not bound it, with its single nature stretches nevertheless immeasurably.

[But void I have already proved to be infinite; therefor matter must be infinite: for if void were infinite, and matter finite] neither sea nor earth nor the glittering quarters of heaven nor mortal kind nor the holy bodies of the gods could hold their ground one brief passing hour; since forced asunder from its union the store of matter would be dissolved and borne along the mighty void, or rather I should say would never have combined to produce any thing, since scattered abroad it could never have been brought together.

For verily not by design did the first beginnings of things station themselves each in its right place guided by keen intelligence, nor did they bargain sooth to say what motions each should assume, but because many in number and shifting about in many ways throughout the universe they are driven and tormented by blows during infinite time past, after trying motions and unions of every kind at length they fall into arrangements such as those out of which this our sum of things has been formed, and by which too, it is preserved through many great years when once it has been thrown into the appropriate motions, and causes the streams to replenish the greedy sea with copious river waters and the earth, fostered by the heat of the sun, to renew its produce, and the race of living things to come up and flourish, and the gliding fires of ether to live:

1035 quod nullo facerent pacto, nisi materiali
ex infinito suboriri copia posset,
unde amissa solent reparare in tempore quaeque.
nam vel uti privata cibo natura animantum
diffluit amittens corpus, sic omnia debent
1040 dissolui simul ac defecit suppeditare
materies aliqua ratione aversa viai.
nec plagae possunt extrinsecus undique summam
conservare omnem, quae cumque est conciliata.
cudere enim crebro possunt partemque morari,
1045 dum veniant aliae ac suppleri summa queatur;
inter dum resilire tamen coguntur et una
principiis rerum spatium tempusque fugai
largiri, ut possint a coetu libera ferri.
quare etiam atque etiam suboriri multa necessest,
1050 et tamen ut plagae quoque possint suppetere ipsae,
infinita opus est vis undique materiali.
Illud in his rebus longe fuge credere, Memmi,
in medium summae quod dicunt omnia niti
atque ideo mundi naturam stare sine ullis
1055 ictibus externis neque quoquam posse resolvi
summa atque ima, quod in medium sint omnia nixa,

ipsum si quicquam posse in se sistere credis,
et quae pondera sunt sub terris omnia sursum
nitier in terraque retro requiescere posta,
1060 ut per aquas quae nunc rerum simulacra videmus;
et simili ratione animalia suppa vagari
contendunt neque posse e terris in loca caeli
reccidere inferiora magis quam corpora nostra
sponte sua possint in caeli templa volare;
1065 illi cum videant solem, nos sidera noctis
cernere et alternis nobiscum tempora caeli
dividere et noctes parilis agitare diebus.

[1033] all which these several things could in nowise bring to pass, unless a store of matter could rise up from infinite space, out of which store they are wont to make up in due season whatever has been lost.

For as the nature of living things when robbed of food loses its substance and wastes away, thus all things must be broken up, as soon as matter has ceased to be supplied, diverted in any way from its proper course.

Nor can blows from without hold together all the sum which has been brought into union.

They can it is true frequently strike upon and stay a part, until others come and the sum can be completed.

At times however they are compelled to rebound and in so doing grant to the first beginnings of things room and time for flight, to enable them to get clear away from the mass in union.

Wherefore again and again I repeat many bodies must rise up; nay for the blows themselves not to fail, there is need of an infinite supply of matter on all sides.

And herein, Memmius, be far from believing this, that all things as they say press to the center of the sum, and that for this reason the nature of the world stands fast without any strokes from the outside and the uppermost and lowest parts cannot part asunder in any direction, because all things have been always pressing towards the center (if you can believe that anything can rest upon itself); or that the heavy bodies which are beneath the earth all press upwards and are at rest on the earth, turned topsy-turvy, just like the images of things we see before us in the waters.

In the same way they maintain that living things walk head downwards and cannot tumble out of earth into the parts of heaven lying below them any more than our bodies can spontaneously fly into the quarters of heaven; that when those see the sun, we behold the stars of night; and that they share with us time about the seasons of heaven and pass nights equal in length to our days.

But groundless [error has devised such dreams] for fools, because they have embraced [false principles of reason.]

sed vanus stolidis haec * * *

amplexi quod habent perv * * *

1070 nam medium nihil esse potest * * *

infinita; neque omnino, si iam medium sit,

possit ibi quicquam consistere * * *

quam quavis alia longe ratione * * *

omnis enim locus ac spatium, quod inane vocamus,

1075 per medium, per non medium, concedere debet

aeque ponderibus, motus qua cumque feruntur.

nec quisquam locus est, quo corpora cum venerunt,

ponderis amissa vi possint stare in inani;

nec quod inane autem est ulli subsistere debet,

1080 quin, sua quod natura petit, concedere pergat.

haud igitur possunt tali ratione teneri

res in concilium medii cuppedine victae.

Praeterea quoniam non omnia corpora fingunt

in medium niti, sed terrarum atque liquoris

umorem ponti magnasque e montibus undas,

1085 et quasi terreno quae corpore contineantur,

at contra tenuis exponunt aeris auras

et calidos simul a medio differri ignis,

atque ideo totum circum tremere aethera signis

1090 et solis flammam per caeli caerula pasci,

quod calor a medio fugiens se ibi conligat omnis,

nec prorsum arboribus summos frondescere ramos

posse, nisi a terris paulatim cuique cibatum

* * *

ne volucris ritu flammarum moenia mundi

diffugiant subito magnum per inane soluta

et ne cetera consimili ratione sequantur

1105 neve ruant caeli tonitralia templa superne

terraque se pedibus raptim subducat et omnis

inter permixtas rerum caelique ruinas

corpora solventes abeat per inane profundum,

temporis ut puncto nihil extet reliquiarum

1110 desertum praeter spatium et primordia caeca.

nam qua cumque prius de parti corpora desse

constitues, haec rebus erit pars ianua leti,

hac se turba foras dabit omnis materiai.

[1069] For there can be no center [where the universe is] infinite; no nor, even if there were a center, could anything take up a position there [any more on that account] than for some quite different reason [be driven away.]

For all room and space, which we term void, must through center, through no-center alike give place to heavy bodies, in whatever directions their motions tend.

Nor is there any spot of such a sort that when bodies have reached it, they can lose their force of gravity and stand upon void; and that again which is void must not serve to support anything, but must, as its nature craves, continually give place.

Things cannot therefore in such a way be held in union, o'er-mastered by love of a center.

Again since they do not suppose that all bodies press to the center, but only those of earth, and those, of water, [both such as descend to the earth in rain] and those which are held in by the earth's body, so to say, the fluid of the sea and great waters from the mountains; while on the other hand they teach that the subtle element of air and hot fires at the same time are carried away from the center and that for this reason the whole ether round bickers with signs and the sun's flame is fed throughout the blue of heaven, because heat flying from the center all gathers together there, and that the topmost boughs of trees could not put forth leaves at all, unless from time to time [nature supplied] food from the earth to each [throughout both stem and boughs, their reasons are not only false, but they contradict each other.

Space I have already proved to be infinite; and space being infinite matter as I have said must also be infinite] lest after the winged fashion of flames the walls of the world should suddenly break up and fly abroad along the mighty void, and all other things follow for like reasons and the innermost quarters of heaven tumble in from above and the earth in an instant withdraw from beneath our feet and amid the commingled ruins of things in it and of heaven, ruins unloosing the first bodies, should wholly pass away along the unfathomable void, so that in a moment of time not a wrack should be left behind, nothing save untenanted space and viewless first-beginnings.

For on whatever side you shall first determine first bodies to be wanting, this side will be the gate of death for things, through this the whole crowd of matter will fling itself abroad.

Haec sic pernosces parva perductus opella;

1115 *namque alid ex alio clarescet nec tibi caeca*

nox iter eripiet, quin ultima naturai

pervideas: ita res accendent lumina rebus.

[1113] If you will thoroughly con these things, then carried to the end with slight trouble [you will be able by yourself to understand all the rest.]

For one thing after another will grow clear and dark night will not rob you of the road and keep you from surveying the utmost ends of nature: in such wise things will light the torch for other things.

Liber Secundus — BOOK II.

Suave, mari magno turbantibus aequora ventis
e terra magnum alterius spectare laborem;
non quia vexari quemquamst iucunda voluptas,
sed quibus ipse malis careas quia cernere suavest.
suave etiam belli certamina magna tueri
5 per campos instructa tua sine parte pericli;
sed nihil dulcius est, bene quam munita tenere
edita doctrina sapientum templa serena,
despicere unde queas alios passimque videre
10 errare atque viam palantis quaerere vitae,
certare ingenio, contendere nobilitate,
noctes atque dies niti praestante labore
ad summas emergere opes rerumque potiri.
o miseras hominum mentes, o pectora caeca!
15 qualibus in tenebris vitae quantisque periclis
degitur hoc aevi quod cumquest! nonne videre
nihil aliud sibi naturam latrare, nisi ut qui
corpore seiunctus dolor absit, mente fruatur
iucundo sensu cura semota metuque?
20 ergo corpoream ad naturam pauca videmus
esse opus omnino: quae demant cumque dolorem,
delicias quoque uti multas substernere possint
gratius inter dum, neque natura ipsa requirit,
si non aurea sunt iuvenum simulacra per aedes
25 lampadas igniferas manibus retinentia dextris,
lumina nocturnis epulis ut suppeditentur,
nec domus argento fulget auroque renidet
nec citharae reboant laqueata aurataque templa,
cum tamen inter se prostrati in gramine molli
30 propter aquae rivum sub ramis arboris altae
non magnis opibus iucunde corpora curant,
praesertim cum tempestas adridet et anni
tempora conspergunt viridantis floribus herbas.

[1] It is sweet, when on the great sea the winds trouble its waters, to behold from land another's deep distress; not that it is a pleasure and delight that any should be afflicted, but because it is sweet to see from what evils you are yourself exempt.

It is sweet also to look upon the mighty struggles of war arrayed along the plains without sharing yourself in the danger.

But nothing is more welcome than to hold the lofty and serene positions

well fortified by the learning of the wise, from which you may look down upon others and see them wandering all abroad and going astray in their search for the path of life, see the contest among them of intellect, the rivalry of birth, the striving night and day with surpassing effort to struggle up to the summit of power and be masters of the world.

O miserable minds of men! O blinded breasts! In what darkness of life and in how great dangers is passed this term of life whatever its duration! Not choose to see that nature craves for herself no more than this, that pain hold aloof from the body, and she in mind enjoy a feeling of pleasure exempt from care and fear? Therefore we see that for the body's nature few things are needed at all, such and such only as take away pain.

Nay, though more gratefully at times they can minister to us many choice delights, nature for her part wants them not, when there are no golden images of youths through the house holding in their right hands flaming lamps for supply of light to the nightly banquet, when the house shines not with silver nor glitters with gold nor do the panelled and gilded roofs re-echo to the harp, what time, though these things be wanting, they spread themselves in groups on the soft grass beside a stream of water under the boughs of a high tree and at no great cost pleasantly refresh their bodies, above all when the weather smiles and the seasons of the year besprinkle the green grass with flowers.

nec calidae citius decedunt corpore febres,
35 textilibus si in picturis ostroque rubenti
iacteris, quam si in plebeia veste cubandum est.
quapropter quoniam nihil nostro in corpore gazeae
proficiunt neque nobilitas nec gloria regni,
quod super est, animo quoque nil prodesse putandum;
40 si non forte tuas legiones per loca campi
fervere cum videas belli simulacra cientis,
subsidiis magnis et opum vi constabilitas,
ornatas armis stlattas pariterque animatas,
his tibi tum rebus timefactae religiones
45 effugiunt animo pavidae mortisque timores
tum vacuum pectus lincunt curaque solutum.
quod si ridicula haec ludibriaque esse videmus,
re veraque metus hominum curaeque sequaces
nec metuunt sonitus armorum nec fera tela
50 audacterque inter reges rerumque potentis
versantur neque fulgorem reverentur ab auro
nec clarum vestis splendorem purpureai,
quid dubitas quin omnis sit haec rationis potestas,
omnis cum in tenebris praesertim vita laboret?
55 nam vel uti pueri trepidant atque omnia caecis
in tenebris metuunt, sic nos in luce timemus

inter dum, nihilo quae sunt metuenda magis quam
quae pueri in tenebris pavitant finguntque futura.
hunc igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque necessest
60 non radii solis neque lucida tela diei
discutiant, sed naturae species ratioque.
Nunc age, quo motu genitalia materiai
corpora res varias gignant genitasque resolvant
et qua vi facere id cogantur quaeque sit ollis
65 reddita mobilitas magnum per inane meandi,
expediam: tu te dictis praebere memento.
nam certe non inter se stipata cohaeret
materies, quoniam minui rem quamque videmus
et quasi longinquo fluere omnia cernimus aevo
70 ex oculisque vetustatem subducere nostris,
cum tamen incolumis videatur summa manere
propterea quia, quae decedunt corpora cuique,
unde abeunt minuunt, quo venere augmine donant.

[34] Nor do hot fevers sooner quit the body if you toss about on pictured tapestry and blushing purple than if you must lie under a poor man's blanket.

Wherefore since treasures avail nothing in respect of our body nor birth nor the glory of kingly power, advancing farther you must hold that they are of no service to the mind as well; unless may be when you see your legions swarm over the ground of the campus waging the mimicry of war, strengthened flank and rear by powerful reserves and great force of cavalry, and you marshal them equipped in arms and animated with one spirit, thereupon you find that religious scruples scared by these things fly panic-stricken from the mind; and that then fears of death leave the breast unembarrassed and free from care, when you see your fleet swarm forth and spread itself far and wide.

But if we see that these things are food for laughter and mere mockeries, and in good truth the fears of men and dogging cares dread not the clash of arms and cruel weapons, if unabashed they mix among kings and caesars and stand not in awe of the glitter from gold nor the brilliant sheen of the purple robe, how can you doubt that this is wholly the prerogative of reason, when the whole of life withal is a struggle in the dark?

For even as children are flurried and dread all things in the thick darkness, thus we in the daylight fear at times things not a whit more to be dreaded than those which children shudder at in the dark and fancy sure to be.

This terror therefore and darkness of mind must be dispelled not by the rays of the sun and glittering shafts of day, but by the aspect and law of nature.

Now mark and I will explain by what motion the begetting bodies of matter do beget different things and after they are begotten again break them up, and by what force they are compelled so to do and what velocity is given to them

for travelling through the great void: do you mind to give heed to my words.

For verily matter does not cohere inseparably massed together, since we see that everything wanes and perceive that all things ebb as it were by length of time and that age withdraws them from our sight, though yet the sum is seen to remain unimpaired by reason that the bodies which quit each thing, lessen the things from which they go, gift with increase those to which they have come, compel the former to grow old, the latter to come to their prime, and yet abide not with these.

illa senescere, at haec contra florescere cogunt,
75 nec remorantur ibi. sic rerum summa novatur
semper, et inter se mortales mutua vivunt.
augescunt aliae gentes, aliae minuuntur,
inque brevi spatio mutantur saecula animantium
et quasi cursores vitae lampada tradunt.
80 Si cessare putas rerum primordia posse
cessandoque novos rerum progignere motus,
avius a vera longe ratione vagaris.
nam quoniam per inane vagantur, cuncta necessest
aut gravitate sua ferri primordia rerum
85 aut ictu forte alterius. nam cum cita saepe
obvia confluxere, fit ut diversa repente
dissiliant; neque enim mirum, durissima quae sint
ponderibus solidis neque quicquam a tergibus obstet.
et quo iactari magis omnia materiai
90 corpora pervideas, reminiscere totius inum
nil esse in summa, neque habere ubi corpora prima
consistant, quoniam spatium sine fine modoquest
inmensumque patere in cunctas undique partis
pluribus ostendi et certa ratione probatumst.
95 quod quoniam constat, ni mirum nulla quies est
reddita corporibus primis per inane profundum,
sed magis adsiduo varioque exercita motu
partim intervallis magnis confulta resultant,
pars etiam brevibus spatiis vexantur ab ictu.
100 et quae cumque magis condenso conciliatu
exiguus intervallis convecta resultant,
indupedita suis perplexis ipsa figuris,
haec validas saxi radices et fera ferri
corpora constituunt et cetera de genere horum.
105 paucula quae porro magnum per inane vagantur,
cetera dissiliunt longe longeque recursant
in magnis intervallis; haec aera rarum
sufficiunt nobis et splendida lumina solis.

multaque praeterea magnum per inane vagantur,
110 conciliis rerum quae sunt reiecta nec usquam
consociare etiam motus potuere recepta.
Cuius, uti memoro, rei simulacrum et imago
ante oculos semper nobis versatur et instat.
contemplator enim, cum solis lumina cumque
115 inserti fundunt radii per opaca domorum:

[75] Thus the sum of things is ever renewed and mortals live by a reciprocal dependency.

Some nations wax, others wane, and in a brief space the races of living things are changed and like runners hand over the lamp of life.

If you think that first-beginnings of things can lag and by lagging give birth to new motions of things, you wander far astray from the path of true reason: since they travel about through void, the first beginnings of things must all move on either by their weight or haply by stroke of another.

For when during motion they have, as often happens, met and clashed, the result is a sudden rebounding in an opposite direction; and no wonder, since they are most hard and of weight proportioned to their solidity and nothing behind gets in their way.

And that you may more clearly see that all bodies of matter are in restless movement, remember that there is no lowest point in the sum of the universe, and that first bodies have not where to take their stand, since space is without end and limit and extends immeasurably in all directions round, as I have shown in many words and as has been proved by sure reason.

Since this then is a certain truth, sure enough no rest is given to first bodies throughout the unfathomable void, but driven on rather in ceaseless and varied motion they partly, after they have pressed together, rebound leaving great spaces between, while in part they are so dashed away after: the stroke as to leave but small spaces between.

And all that form a denser aggregation when brought together and rebound leaving trifling spaces between, held fast by their own close-tangled shapes, these form enduring bases of stone and unyielding bodies of iron and the rest of their class; few in number, which travel onward along the great void.

All the others spring far off and rebound far leaving great spaces between: these furnish us with thin air and bright sunlight.

And many more travel along the great void, which have been thrown off from the unions of things or though admitted have yet in no case been able likewise to assimilate their motions.

Of this truth, which I am telling, we have a representation and picture always going on before our eyes and present to us: observe whenever the rays are let in and pour the sunlight through the dark chambers of houses:

multa minuta modis multis per inane videbis
corpora misceri radiorum lumine in ipso

et vel ut aeterno certamine proelia pugnās
edere turmatim certantia nec dare pausam,
120 conciliis et discidiis exercita crebris;
conicere ut possis ex hoc, primordia rerum
quale sit in magno iactari semper inani.
dum taxat, rerum magnarum parva potest res
exemplare dare et vestigia notitiae.
125 Hoc etiam magis haec animum te advertere par est
corpora quae in solis radiis turbare videntur,
quod tales turbae motus quoque materiai
significant clandestinos caecosque subesse.
multa videbis enim plagis ibi percita caecis
130 commutare viam retroque repulsa reverti
nunc huc nunc illuc in cunctas undique partis.
scilicet hic a principiis est omnibus error.
prima moventur enim per se primordia rerum,
inde ea quae parvo sunt corpora conciliatu
135 et quasi proxima sunt ad viris principiorum,
ictibus illorum caecis impulsa cientur,
ipsaque proporro paulo maiora lacessunt.
sic a principiis ascendit motus et exit
paulatim nostros ad sensus, ut moveantur
140 illa quoque, in solis quae lumine cernere quimus
nec quibus id faciant plagis apparet aperte.
Nunc quae mobilitas sit reddita materiai
corporibus, paucis licet hinc cognoscere, Memmi.
primum aurora novo cum spargit lumine terras
145 et variae volucres nemora avia pervolitantes
aera per tenerum liquidis loca vocibus opplent,
quam subito soleat sol ortus tempore tali
convestire sua perfundens omnia luce,
omnibus in promptu manifestumque esse videmus.
150 at vapor is, quem sol mittit, lumenque serenum
non per inane meat vacuum; quo tardius ire
cogitur, aerias quasi dum diverberat undas;
nec singillatim corpuscula quaeque vaporis
sed complexa meant inter se conque globata;
155 qua propter simul inter se retrahuntur et extra
officiuntur, uti cogantur tardius ire.
at quae sunt solida primordia simplicitate,
cum per inane meant vacuum nec res remoratur
ulla foris atque ipsa suis e partibus unum,
160 unum, in quem coepere, locum conixa feruntur,
debent ni mirum praecellere mobilitate

et multo citius ferri quam lumina solis
multiplexque loci spatium transcurrere eodem
tempore quo solis pervolgant fulgura caelum.

* * *

[116] you will see many minute bodies in many ways through the apparent void mingle in the midst of the light of the rays, and as in never-ending conflict skirmish and give battle combating in troops and never halting, driven about in frequent meetings and partings; so that you may guess from this, what it is for first-beginnings of things to be ever tossing about in the great void.

So far as it goes, a small thing may give an illustration of great things and put you on the track of knowledge.

And for this reason too it is meet that you should give greater heed to these bodies which are seen to tumble about in the sun's rays, because such tumblings imply that motions also of matter latent and unseen are at the bottom.

For you will observe many things there impelled by unseen blows to change their course and driven back return the way they came now this way, now that way in all directions round.

All, you are to know, derive this restlessness from the first-beginnings.

For the first-beginnings of things move first of themselves; (next those bodies which form a small aggregate and come nearest, so to say to the powers of the first beginnings, are impelled and set in movement by the unseen strokes of those first bodies, and they next in turn stir up bodies which are a little larger.

Thus motion mounts up from the first-beginnings and step by step issues forth to our senses, so that those bodies also move, which we can discern in the sunlight, though it is not clearly seen by what blows they so act.

Now what velocity is given to bodies of matter, you may apprehend, Memmius in few words from this: when morning first sprinkles the earth with fresh light and the different birds flitting about the pathless woods through the buxom air fill all places with their clear notes, we see it to be plain and evident to all how suddenly the sun after rising is wont at such a time to overspread all things and clothe them with his light.

But that heat which the sun emits and that bright light pass not through empty void; and therefore they are forced to travel more slowly, until they cleave through the waves so to speak, of air.

Nor do the several minute bodies of heat pass on one by one, but closely entangled and massed together; whereby at one and the same time they are pulled back by one another and are impeded from without; so that they are forced to travel more slowly.

But the first-beginnings which are of solid singleness, when they pass through empty void and nothing delays them from without and they themselves, single from the nature of their parts, are borne with headlong

endeavor towards the one single spot to which their efforts tend, must sure enough surpass in velocity and be carried along much more swiftly than the light of the sun, and race through many times the extent of space in the same time in which the beams of the sun fill the heaven throughout. [nor follow up the several first-beginnings to see by what law each thing goes on.]

165 nec persectari primordia singula quaeque,
ut videant qua quicque geratur cum ratione.
At quidam contra haec, ignari materiai,
naturam non posse deum sine numine reddunt
tanto opere humanis rationibus atmoderate
170 tempora mutare annorum frugesque creare
et iam cetera, mortalis quae suadet adire
ipsaque deducit dux vitae dia voluptas
et res per Veneris blanditur saecula propagent,
ne genus occidat humanum. quorum omnia causa
175 constituisse deos cum fingunt, omnibus rebus
magno opere a vera lapsi ratione videntur.
nam quamvis rerum ignorem primordia quae sint,
hoc tamen ex ipsis caeli rationibus ausim
confirmare aliisque ex rebus reddere multis,
180 nequaquam nobis divinitus esse creatam
naturam mundi: tanta stat praedita culpa.
quae tibi posterius, Memmi, faciemus aperta;
nunc id quod super est de motibus expediemus.
Nunc locus est, ut opinor, in his illud quoque rebus
185 confirmare tibi, nullam rem posse sua vi
corpoream sursum ferri sursumque meare.
ne tibi dent in eo flammaram corpora frudem;
sursus enim versus gignuntur et augmina sumunt
et sursum nitidae fruges arbustaque crescunt,
190 pondera, quantum in se est, cum deorsum cuncta ferantur.
nec cum subsiliunt ignes ad tecta domorum
et celeri flamma degustant tigna trabesque,
sponte sua facere id sine vi subiecta putandum est.
quod genus e nostro com missus corpore sanguis
195 emicat exultans alte spargitque cruorem.
nonne vides etiam quanta vi tigna trabesque
respuat umor aquae? nam quo magis ursimus altum
directa et magna vi multi pressimus aegre,

[165] But some in opposition to this, ignorant of matter, believe that nature cannot without the providence of the gods, in such nice conformity to the ways of men, vary the seasons of the year and bring forth crops, ay and all the other things, which divine pleasure, the guide of life, prompts men to

approach, escorting them in person and enticing them by her fondlings to continue their races through the arts of Venus, that mankind may not come to an end.

Now when they suppose that the gods designed all things for the sake of men, they seem to me in all respects to have strayed most widely from true reason.

For even if I did not know what first-beginnings are, yet this, judging by the very arrangements of heaven, I would venture to maintain, that the nature of the world has by no means been made for us by divine power: so great are the defects with which it stands encumbered.

All which, Memmius, we will hereafter make clear to you: we will now go on to explain what remains to be told of motions.

Now methinks is the place herein to prove this point also, that no bodily thing can by its own power be borne upwards and travel upwards; that the bodies of flames may not in this manner lead you into error.

For they are begotten with an upward tendency, and in the same direction receive increase, and goodly crops and trees grow upwards, though their weights, so far as in them is, all tend downwards.

And when fires leap to the roofs of houses and with swift flame lick up rafters and beams, we are not to suppose that they do so spontaneously without a force pushing them up.

Even thus blood discharged from our body spurts out and springs upon high and scatters gore about.

See you not too with what force the liquid of water spits out logs and beams?

The more deeply we have pushed them sheer down and have pressed them in, many of us together, with all our might and much painful effort, with the greater avidity it vomits them up and casts them forth, so that they rise and start out more than half their length.

tam cupide sursum removet magis atque remittit,
200 plus ut parte foras emergant exilientque.
nec tamen haec, quantum est in se, dubitamus, opinor,
quin vacuum per inane deorsum cuncta ferantur.
sic igitur debent flammae quoque posse per auras
aeris expressae sursum succedere, quamquam
205 pondera, quantum in se est, deorsum deducere pugnent.
nocturnasque faces caeli sublime volantis
nonne vides longos flammaram ducere tractus
in quas cumque dedit partis natura meatum?
non cadere in terras stellas et sidera cernis?
210 sol etiam caeli de vertice dissipat omnis
ardorem in partis et lumine conserit arva;
in terras igitur quoque solis vergitur ardor.

transversosque volare per imbris fulmina cernis,
 nunc hinc nunc illinc abrupti nubibus ignes
 215 concursant; cadit in terras vis flammea volgo.
 Illud in his quoque te rebus cognoscere avemus,
 corpora cum deorsum rectum per inane feruntur
 ponderibus propriis, incerto tempore ferme
 incertisque locis spatio depellere paulum,
 220 tantum quod momen mutatum dicere possis.
 quod nisi declinare solerent, omnia deorsum
 imbris uti guttae caderent per inane profundum
 nec foret offensus natus nec plaga creata
 principiis; ita nihil umquam natura creasset.
 225 Quod si forte aliquis credit graviora potesse
 corpora, quo citius rectum per inane feruntur,
 incidere ex supero levioribus atque ita plagas
 gignere, quae possint genitalis reddere motus,
 avius a vera longe ratione recedit.
 230 nam per aquas quae cumque cadunt atque aera rarum,
 haec pro ponderibus casus celerare necessest
 propterea quia corpus aquae naturaeque tenvis
 aeris haud possunt aequae rem quamque morari,
 sed citius cedunt gravioribus exsuperata;
 235 at contra nulli de nulla parte neque ullo
 tempore inane potest vacuum subsistere rei,
 quin, sua quod natura petit, concedere pergat;
 omnia qua propter debent per inane quietum
 aequae ponderibus non aequis concita ferri.
 240 haud igitur poterunt levioribus incidere umquam
 ex supero graviora neque ictus gignere per se,
 qui varient motus, per quos natura gerat res.

[199] And yet methinks we doubt not that these, so far as in them is, are all borne downwards through the empty void.

In the same way flames also ought to be able, when squeezed out, to mount upward through the air, although their weights, so far as in them is, strive to draw them down.

See you not too that the nightly meteors of heaven as they fly aloft draw after them long trails of flames in whatever direction nature has given them a passage?

Do you not perceive stars and constellations fall to the earth?

The sun also from the height of heaven sheds its heat on all sides and sows the fields with light; to the earth, therefore, as well, the sun's heat tends.

Lightnings also you see fly athwart the rains: now from this side now from that, fires burst from the clouds and rush about; the force of flame falls to the

earth all round.

This point too, herein we wish you to apprehend: when bodies are borne downwards sheer through void by their own weights, at quite uncertain times and uncertain spots they push themselves a little from their course: you just and only just can call it a change of inclination.

If they were not used to swerve, they would all fall down, like drops of rain, through the deep void, and no clashing would have been begotten nor blow produced among the first beginnings: thus nature never would have produced aught.

But if haply any one believes that heavier bodies, as they are carried more quickly sheer through space, can fall from above on the lighter and so beget blows able to produce begetting motions, he goes most widely astray from true reason.

For whenever bodies fall through water and thin air, they must quicken their descents in proportion to their weights, because the body of water and subtle nature of air cannot retard everything in equal degree, but more readily give way, overpowered by the heavier: on the other hand empty void cannot offer resistance to anything in any direction at any time, but must, as its nature craves, continually give way; and for this reason all things must be moved and borne along with equal velocity though of unequal weights through the unresisting void.

Therefore heavier things will never be able to fall from above on lighter nor of themselves to beget blows sufficient to produce the varied motions by which nature carries on things.

quare etiam atque etiam paulum inclinare necessest
corpora; nec plus quam minimum, ne fingere motus

²⁴⁵ obliquos videamur et id res vera refutet.

namque hoc in promptu manifestumque esse videmus,

pondera, quantum in se est, non posse obliqua meare,

ex supero cum praecipitant, quod cernere possis;

sed nihil omnino recta regione viai

²⁵⁰ declinare quis est qui possit cernere sese?

Denique si semper motu conectitur omnis

et vetere exoritur motus novus ordine certo

nec declinando faciunt primordia motus

principium quoddam, quod fati foedera rumpat,

²⁵⁵ ex infinito ne causam causa sequatur,

libera per terras unde haec animantibus exstat,

unde est haec, inquam, fatis avolsa voluntas,

per quam progredimur quo ducit quemque voluptas,

declinamus item motus nec tempore certo

²⁶⁰ nec regione loci certa, sed ubi ipsa tulit mens?

nam dubio procul his rebus sua cuique voluntas

principium dat et hinc motus per membra rigantur.
nonne vides etiam patefactis tempore puncto
carceribus non posse tamen prorumpere equorum
265 vim cupidam tam de subito quam mens avet ipsa?
omnis enim totum per corpus materiai
copia conciri debet, concita per artus
omnis ut studium mentis conixa sequatur;
ut videas initum motus a corde creari
270 ex animique voluntate id procedere primum,
inde dari porro per totum corpus et artus.
nec similest ut cum impulsī procedimus ictu
viribus alterius magnis magnoque coactu;
nam tum materiem totius corporis omnem
275 perspicuumst nobis invitīs ire rapique,
donec eam refrenavit per membra voluntas.
iamne vides igitur, quamquam vis externa multos
pellat et invitos cogat procedere saepe
praecipitesque rapi, tamen esse in pectore nostro
280 quiddam quod contra pugnare obstareque possit?
cuius ad arbitrium quoque copia materiai
cogitur inter dum flecti per membra per artus
et proiecta refrenatur retroque residit.

[243] Wherefore again and again I say bodies must swerve a little; and an yet not more than the least possible; lest we be found to be imagining oblique motions and this the reality should refute.

For this we see to be plain and evident, that weights, so far as in them is, cannot travel obliquely, when they fall from above, at least so far as you can perceive; but that nothing swerves in any case from the straight course, who is there that can perceive? Again if all motion is ever linked together and a new motion ever springs from another in a fixed order and first-beginnings do not by swerving make some commencement of motion to break through the decrees of fate, that cause follow not cause from everlasting, whence have all living creatures here on earth, whence, I ask, has been wrested from the fates the power by which we go forward whither the will leads each, by which likewise we change the direction of our motions neither at a fixed time nor fixed place, but when and where the mind itself has prompted?

For beyond a doubt, in these things his own will makes for each a beginning and from this beginning motions are welled through the limbs.

See you not too, when the barriers are thrown open at a given moment, that yet the eager powers of the horses cannot start forward so instantaneously as the mind itself desires?

The whole store of matter through the whole body must be sought out, in order that stirred up through all the frame it may follow with undivided effort

the bent of the mind; so that you see the beginning of motion is born from the heart, and the action first commences in the will of the mind and next is transmitted through the whole body and frame.

Quite different is the case when we move on propelled by a stroke inflicted by the strong might and strong compulsion of another; for then it is quite clear that all the matter of the whole body moves and is hurried on against our inclination, until the will has reined it in throughout the limbs.

Do you see then in this case that, though an outward force often pushes men on and compels them frequently to advance against their will and to be hurried headlong on, there yet is something in our breast sufficient to struggle against and resist it? And when ,too, this something chooses, the store of matter is compelled sometimes to change its course through the limbs and frame, and after it has been forced forward, is reined in and settles back into its place.

quare in seminibus quoque idem fateare necessest,
285 esse aliam praeter plagas et pondera causam
motibus, unde haec est nobis innata potestas,
de nihilo quoniam fieri nihil posse videmus.
pondus enim prohibet ne plagis omnia fiant
externa quasi vi; sed ne res ipsa necessum
290 intestinum habeat cunctis in rebus agendis
et devicta quasi cogatur ferre patique,
id facit exiguum clinamen principiorum
nec regione loci certa nec tempore certo.
Nec stipata magis fuit umquam material
295 copia nec porro maioribus intervallis;
nam neque adaugescit quicquam neque deperit inde.
qua propter quo nunc in motu principiorum
corpora sunt, in eodem ante acta aetate fuere
et post haec semper simili ratione ferentur,
300 et quae consuerint gigni gignentur eadem
condicione et erunt et crescent vique valebunt,
quantum cuique datum est per foedera naturai.
nec rerum summam commutare ulla potest vis;
nam neque quo possit genus ullum material
305 effugere ex omni quicquam est extra, neque in omne
unde coorta queat nova vis inrumpere et omnem
naturam rerum mutare et vertere motus.
Illud in his rebus non est mirabile, quare,
omnia cum rerum primordia sint in motu,
310 summa tamen summa videatur stare quiete,
praeter quam siquid proprio dat corpore motus.
omnis enim longe nostris ab sensibus infra

primorum natura iacet; qua propter, ubi ipsa
cernere iam nequeas, motus quoque surpere debent;
315 praesertim cum, quae possimus cernere, celent
saepe tamen motus spatio diducta locorum.
nam saepe in colli tondentes pabula laeta
lanigerae reptant pecudes, quo quamque vocantes
invitant herbae gemmantes rore recenti,
320 et satiati agni ludunt blandeque coruscant;
omnia quae nobis longe confusa videntur
et velut in viridi candor consistere colli.
praeterea magnae legiones cum loca cursu
camporum complent belli simulacra cientes,
325 fulgor ubi ad caelum se tollit totaque circum
aere renidescit tellus supterque virum vi
excitur pedibus sonitus clamoreque montes
icti reiectant voces ad sidera mundi
et circum volitant equites mediosque repente
330 tramittunt valido quatientes impete campos;

[284] Wherefore in seeds too you must admit the same, admit that besides blows and weights there is a cause of motions, from which this power of free action has been begotten in us, since we see that nothing can come from nothing.

For weight forbids that all things be done by blows through as it were an outward force; but that the mind itself does not feel an internal necessity in all its actions and is not as it were overmastered and compelled to bear and put up with this, is caused by a minute swerving of first beginnings at no fixed part of space and no fixed time.

Nor was the store of matter ever more closely massed nor held apart by larger spaces between; for nothing is either added to its bulk or lost to it.

Wherefore the bodies of the first-beginnings in time gone by moved in the same way in which now they move, and will ever hereafter be borne along in like manner, and the things which have been wont to be begotten will be begotten after the same law and will be and will grow and will wax in strength so far as is given to each by the decrees of nature.

And no force can change the sum of things; for there is nothing outside, either into which any kind of matter can escape out of the universe or out of which a new supply can arise and burst into the universe and change all the nature of things and alter their motions.

And herein you need not wonder at this, that though the first-beginnings of things are all in motion, yet the sum is seen to rest in supreme repose, unless where a thing exhibits motions with its individual body.

For all the nature of first things lies far away from our senses beneath their ken; and therefore since they are themselves beyond what you can see, they

must withdraw from sight their motion as well; and the more so that the things which we can see, do yet often conceal their motions when a great distance off.

Thus often the woolly flocks as they crop the glad pastures on a hill, creep on whither the grass jeweled with fresh dew summons and invites each, and the lambs fed to the full gambol and playfully butt; all which objects appear to us from a distance to be blended together and to rest like a white spot on a green hill.

Again when mighty legions fill with their movements all parts of the plains waging the mimicry of war, the glitter then lifts itself up to the sky, and the whole earth round gleams with brass and beneath a noise is raised by the mighty trampling of men and the mountains stricken by the shouting re-echo the voices to the stars of heaven, and horsemen fly about and suddenly wheeling scour across the middle of the plains, shaking them with the vehemence of their charge.

et tamen est quidam locus altis montibus, unde
stare videntur et in campis consistere fulgor.
Nunc age, iam deinceps cunctarum exordia rerum
qualia sint et quam longe distantia formis,
335 percipe, multigenis quam sint variata figuris;
non quo multa parum simili sint praedita forma,
sed quia non volgo paria omnibus omnia constant.
nec mirum; nam cum sit eorum copia tanta,
ut neque finis, uti docui, neque summa sit ulla,
340 debent ni mirum non omnibus omnia prorsum
esse pari filo similique adfecta figura.

Praeterea genus humanum mutaeque natantes
squamigerum pecudes et laeta armenta feraeque
et variae volucres, laetantia quae loca aquarum
345 concelebrant circum ripas fontisque lacusque,
et quae pervolgant nemora avia pervolitantes,
quorum unum quidvis generatim sumere perge;
invenies tamen inter se differre figuris.

nec ratione alia proles cognoscere matrem
350 nec mater posset prolem; quod posse videmus
nec minus atque homines inter se nota cluere.
nam saepe ante deum vitulus delubra decora
turicremas propter mactatus concidit aras
sanguinis expirans calidum de pectore flumen;
355 at mater viridis saltus orbata peragrans
novit humi pedibus vestigia pressa bisulcis,
omnia convisens oculis loca, si queat usquam
conspicere amissum fetum, completque querellis

frondiferum nemus adsistens et crebra revisit
360 ad stabulum desiderio perfixa iuveni,
nec tenerae salices atque herbae rore vigentes
fluminaque ulla queunt summis labentia ripis
oblectare animum subitamque avertere curam,
nec vitulorum aliae species per pabula laeta
365 derivare queunt animum curaque levare;
usque adeo quiddam proprium notumque requirit.

[330] And yet there is some spot on the high hills, seen from which they appear to stand still and to rest on the plains as a bright spot.

Now mark and next in order apprehend of what kind and how widely differing in their forms are the beginnings of all things, how varied by manifold diversities of shape; not that a scanty number are possessed of a like form, but because as a rule they do not all resemble one the other.

And no wonder; for since there is so great a store of them that, as I have shown, there is no end or sum, they must sure enough not one and all be marked by an equal bulk and like shape, one with another.

Let the race of man pass before you in review, and the mute swimming shoals of the scaly tribes and the blithe herds and wild beasts and the different birds which haunt the gladdening watering spots about river-banks and springs and pools, and those which flit about and throng the pathless woods: then go and take any, one you like in any one kind, and you will yet find that they differ in their shapes, every one from every other.

And in no other way could child recognize mother or mother child; and this we see that they all can do, and that they are just as well known to one another as human beings are.

Thus often in front of the beauteous shrines of the gods a calf falls sacrificed beside the incense-burning altars, and spurts from its breast a warm stream of blood; but the bereaved mother as she ranges over the green lawns knows the footprints stamped on the ground by the cloven hoofs, scanning with her eyes every spot to see if she can anywhere behold her lost youngling: then she fills with her moanings the leafy wood each time she desists from her search and again and again goes back to the stall pierced to the heart by the loss of her calf; nor can the soft willows and grass quickened with dew and yon rivers gliding level with their banks comfort her mind and put away the care that has entered into her, nor can other forms of calves throughout the glad pastures divert her mind and ease it of its care: so persistently she seeks something special and known.

Again the tender kids with their shaking voices know their horned dams and the butting lambs the flocks of bleating sheep;

praeterea teneri tremulis cum vocibus haedi
cornigeras norunt matres agnique petulci
balantum pecudes; ita, quod natura resposcit,

370 ad sua quisque fere decurrunt ubera lactis.
 Postremo quodvis frumentum non tamen omne
 quidque suo genere inter se simile esse videbis,
 quin intercurrat quaedam distantia formis.
 concharumque genus parili ratione videmus
 375 pingere telluris gremium, qua mollibus undis
 litoris incurvi bibulam pavit aequor harenam.
 quare etiam atque etiam simili ratione necessest,
 natura quoniam constant neque facta manu sunt
 unius ad certam formam primordia rerum,
 380 dissimili inter se quaedam volitare figura.
 Perfacile est animi ratione exsolvere nobis
 quare fulmineus multo penetralior ignis
 quam noster fluat e taedis terrestribus ortus;
 dicere enim possis caelestem fulminis ignem
 385 subtilem magis e parvis constare figuris
 atque ideo transire foramina quae nequit ignis
 noster hic e lignis ortus taedaeque creatus.
 praeterea lumen per cornum transit, at imber
 respuitur. quare, nisi luminis illa minora
 390 corpora sunt quam de quibus est liquor almus aquarum?
 et quamvis subito per colum vina videmus
 perfluere, at contra tardum cunctatur olivom,
 aut quia ni mirum maioribus est elementis
 aut magis hamatis inter se perque plicatis,
 395 atque ideo fit uti non tam diducta repente
 inter se possint primordia singula quaeque
 singula per cuiusque foramina permanare.
 Huc accedit uti mellis lactisque liquores
 iucundo sensu linguae tractentur in ore;
 400 at contra taetra absinthii natura ferique
 centauri foedo pertorquent ora sapore;
 ut facile agnoscas e levibus atque rutundis
 esse ea quae sensus iucunde tangere possunt,
 at contra quae amara atque aspera cumque videntur,
 405 haec magis hamatis inter se nexa teneri
 proptereaque solere vias rescindere nostris
 sensibus introituque suo perrumpere corpus.
 omnia postremo bona sensibus et mala tactu
 dissimili inter se pugnant perfecta figura;

[368] thus they run, as nature craves, each without fail to its own udder of milk.

Lastly in the case of any kind of corn you like you will yet find that any

one grain is not so similar to any other in the same kind, but that there runs through them some difference to distinguish the forms.

On a like principle of difference we see the class of shells paint the lap of earth, when the sea with gentle waves beats on the thirsty sand of the winding shore.

Therefore again and again I say it is necessary for like reasons that first-beginnings of things, since they exist by nature and are not made by hand after the exact model of one, should fly about with shapes in some cases differing one from the other.

It is right easy for us on such a principle to explain why the fire of lightning has much more power to pierce than ours which is born of earthly pinewood: you may say that the heavenly fire of lightning subtle as it is, is formed of smaller shapes and therefore passes through openings which this our fire cannot pass, born, as it is of woods and sprung from pine.

Again light passes through horn, but rain is thrown off. Why?

But that those first bodies of light are smaller than those of which the nurturing liquid of water is made.

And quickly as we see wines flow through a strainer, sluggish oil on the other hand is slow to do so, because sure enough it consists of elements either larger in size or more hooked and tangled in one another, and therefore it is that the first-beginnings of things cannot so readily be separated from each other and severally stream through the several openings of any thing.

Moreover the liquids honey and milk excite a pleasant sensation of tongue when held in the mouth; but on the other hand the nauseous nature of wormwood and of harsh centaury writhes the mouth with a noisome flavor; so that you may easily see that the things which are able to affect the senses pleasantly consist of smooth and round elements; while all those on the other hand which are found to be bitter and harsh, are held in connection by particles that are more hooked and for this reason are wont to tear open passages into our senses and in entering in to break through the body.

All things in short, which are agreeable to the senses and all which are unpleasant to the feeling are mutually repugnant, formed as they are out of an unlike first shape;

410 ne tu forte putes serrae stridentis acerbum
horrorem constare elementis levibus aequae
ac musaea mele, per chordas organici quae
mobilibus digitis expergefata figurant;
neu simili penetrare putes primordia forma

415 in nares hominum, cum taetra cadavera torrent,
et cum scena croco Cilici perfusa recens est
araque Panchaeos exhalat propter odores;
neve bonos rerum simili constare colores
semine constituas, oculos qui pascere possunt,

420 et qui conpungunt aciem lacrimareque cogunt
aut foeda specie foedi turpesque videntur.
omnis enim, sensus quae mulcet cumque, tibi res
haut sine principali aliquo levore creatast;
at contra quae cumque molesta atque aspera constat,
425 non aliquo sine materiae squalore repertast.
Sunt etiam quae iam nec levia iure putantur
esse neque omnino flexis mucronibus unca,
sed magis angellis paulum prostantibus, ut quae
titillare magis sensus quam laedere possint,
430 fecula iam quo de genere est inulaeque saporēs.
Denique iam calidos ignis gelidamque pruinam
dissimili dentata modo conpungere sensus
corporis, indicio nobis est tactus uterque.
tactus enim, tactus, pro divum numina sancta,
435 corporis est sensus, vel cum res externa sese
insinuat, vel cum laedit quae in corpore natast
aut iuvat egrediens genitalis per Veneris res,
aut ex offensu cum turbant corpore in ipso,
semina confundunt inter se concita sensum;
440 ut si forte manu quamvis iam corporis ipse
tute tibi partem ferias atque experiare.
qua propter longe formas distare necessest
principiis, varios quae possint edere sensus.
Denique quae nobis durata ac spissa videntur,
445 haec magis hamatis inter sese esse necessest
et quasi ramosis alte compacta teneri.
in quo iam genere in primis adamantina saxa
prima acie constant ictus contemnere sueta
et validi silices ac duri robora ferri
450 aeraque quae claustris restantia vociferantur.

[409] lest haply you suppose that the harsh grating of the creaking saw consists of the elements as smooth as those of tuneful melodies which musicians wake into life with nimble fingers and give shape to on strings; or suppose that the first-beginnings are of like shape which pass into the nostrils of men, when noisome carcasses are burning, and when the stage is fresh sprinkled with Cilician saffron, while the altar close by exhales Panchaeian odors; or decide that the pleasant colors of things which are able to feast the eyes are formed of a seedlike to the seed of those which make the pupil smart and force it to shed tears or from their disgusting aspect look hideous and foul.

For every shape which gratifies the senses has been formed not without a smoothness in its elements; but on the other hand whatever is painful and

harsh has been produced not without some roughness of matter.

There are too some elements which are with justice thought to be neither smooth nor altogether hooked with barbed points, but rather to have minute angles slightly projecting, so that they can tickle rather than hurt the senses; of which class tartar of wine is formed and the flavors of elecampane.

Again that hot fires and cold frost have fangs of a dissimilar kind wherewith to pierce the senses, is proved to us by the touch of each.

For touch, touch, ye holy divinities of the gods, the body's feeling is, either when an extraneous thing makes its way in, or when a thing which is born in the body hurts it, or gives pleasure as it issues forth by the birth-bestowing ways of Venus, or when from some collision the seeds are disordered within the body and distract the feeling by their mutual disturbance; as if haply you were yourself to strike with the hand any part of the body you please and so make trial.

Wherefore the shapes of the first-beginnings must differ widely, since they are able to give birth to different feelings.

Again things which look to us hard and dense must consist of particles more hooked together, and be held in union because welded all through with branch-like elements.

In this class first of all diamond stones stand in foremost line inured to despise blows, and stout blocks of basalt and the strength of hard iron and brass bolts which scream out as they hold fast to their staples.

Those things which are liquid and of fluid body ought to consist more of smooth and round elements;

illa quidem debent e levibus atque rutundis
esse magis, fluvido quae corpore liquida constant.
namque papaveris haustus itemst facilis quod aquarum;
nec retinentur enim inter se glomeramina quaeque
455 et percussus item proclive volubilis exstat.
omnia postremo quae puncto tempore cernis
diffugere ut fumum nebulas flammasque, necessest,
si minus omnia sunt e levibus atque rotundis,
at non esse tamen perplexis indupedita,
460 pungere uti possint corpus penetrareque saxa,
nec tamen haerere inter se; quod cumque videmus
sensibus dentatum, facile ut cognoscere possis
non e perplexis, sed acutis esse elementis.
sed quod amara vides eadem quae fluvida constant,
465 sudor uti maris est, minime mirabile debet

* * *

nam quod fluvidus est, e levibus atque rotundis
est, sed levibus sunt hamata admixta doloris

corpora. nec tamen haec retineri hamata necessust:
scilicet esse globosa tamen, cum squalida constant,
470 provolvi simul ut possint et laedere sensus.
et quo mixta putes magis aspera levibus esse
principiis, unde est Neptuni corpus acerbum,
est ratio secernendi seorsumque videndi,
umor dulcis ubi per terras crebrius idem
475 percolatur, ut in foveam fluat ac mansuescat;
linquit enim supera taetri primordia viri,
aspera quo magis in terris haerescere possint.
Quod quoniam docui, pergam conectere rem quae
ex hoc apta fidem ducat, primordia rerum
480 finita variare figurarum ratione.
quod si non ita sit, rursum iam semina quaedam
esse infinito debebunt corporis auctu.
namque in eadem una cuiusvis iam brevitate
corporis inter se multum variare figurae
485 non possunt. fac enim minimis e partibus esse
corpora prima tribus, vel paulo pluribus auge;
nempe ubi eas partis unius corporis omnis,
summa atque ima locans, transmutans dextera laevis,
omnimodis expertus eris, quam quisque det ordo
490 formai speciem totius corporis eius,
quod super est, si forte voles variare figuras,
addendum partis alias erit. inde sequetur,
adsimili ratione alias ut postulet ordo,
si tu forte voles etiam variare figuras.

[452] for the several drops have no mutual cohesion and their onward course too has a ready flow downwards.

All things lastly which you see disperse themselves in an instant, as smoke mists and flames, if they do not consist entirely of smooth and round, must yet not be held fast by closely tangled elements, so that they may be able to pierce the body and enter it with biting power, yet not stick together: thus you may easily know, that whatever we see the senses have been able to allay, consists not of tangled but of pointed elements.

Do not however hold it to be wonderful that some things which are fluid you see to be likewise bitter, for instance the sea's moisture: because it is fluid, it consists of smooth and round particles, and many rough bodies mixed up with these produce pains; and yet they must not be hooked so as to hold together: you are to know that though rough, they are yet spherical, so that while they roll freely on, they may at the same time hurt the senses.

And that you may more readily believe that with smooth are mixed rough first-beginnings from which Neptune's body is made bitter, there is a way of

separating these, and of seeing how the fresh water, when it is often filtered through the earth, flows by itself into a trench and sweetens; for it leaves above the first-beginnings of the nauseous saltness, inasmuch as the rough particles can more readily stay behind in the earth.

And now that I have shown this, I will go on to link to it a truth which depends on this and from this draws its proof: the first-beginnings of things have different shapes, but the number of shapes is finite.

If this were not so, then once more it would follow that some seeds must be of infinite bulk of body.

For in the same seed, in the single small size any first body you like the shapes cannot vary much from one another: say for instance that first bodies consist of three least parts, or augment them by a few more; when to wit in all possible ways, by placing each in turn at the top and at the bottom, by making the right change places with the left, you shall have tried all those parts of one first body and found what manner of shape each different arrangement gives to the whole of that body, if after all this haply you shall wish still to vary the shapes, you will have to add other parts; it will next follow that, for like reasons the arrangement will require other parts, if haply you shall wish still again to vary the shapes.

495 ergo formarum novitatem corporis augmen
subsequitur. quare non est ut credere possis
esse infinitis distantia semina formis,
ne quaedam cogas inmani maximitate
esse, supra quod iam docui non posse probari.
500 iam tibi barbaricae vestes Meliboeaque fulgens
purpura Thessalico concharum tacta colore,
aurea pavonum ridenti imbuta lepore
saecla novo rerum superata colore iacerent
et contemptus odor smyrnae mellisque sapor,
505 et cycnea mele Phoebeaque daedala chordis
carmina consimili ratione oppressa silerent;
namque aliis aliud praestantius exoreretur.
cedere item retro possent in deteriores
omnia sic partis, ut diximus in melioris;
510 namque aliis aliud retro quoque taetrius esset
naribus auribus atque oculis orisque sapor.
quae quoniam non sunt, sed rebus reddita certa
finis utrimque tenet summam, fateare necessest
materiem quoque finitis differe figuris.
515 denique ab ignibus ad gelidas hiemum usque pruinas
finitumst retroque pari ratione remensumst.
omnis enim calor ac frigus medique tepores
interutrasque iacent explentes ordine summam.

ergo finita distant ratione creata,
520 ancipiti quoniam mucroni utrimque notantur,
hinc flammis illinc rigidis infesta pruinis.
Quod quoniam docui, pergam conectere rem quae
ex hoc apta fidem ducat, primordia rerum,
inter se simili quae sunt perfecta figura,
525 infinita cluere. etenim distantia cum sit
formarum finita, necesse est quae similes sint
esse infinitas aut summam materiai
finitam constare, id quod non esse probavi.

* * *

versibus ostendam corpuscula materiai
ex infinito summam rerum usque tenere
undique protelo plagarum continuato.
nam quod rara vides magis esse animalia quaedam
fecundamque magis naturam cernis in illis,
at regione locoque alio terrisque remotis
535 multa licet genere esse in eo numerumque repleri;

[494] From all this it results that increase of bulk in the body follows upon newness of the shapes.

Wherefore you cannot possibly believe that seeds have an infinite variety of forms, lest you force some to be of a monstrous hugeness, which as I have above shown cannot be proved.

Moreover I tell you barbaric robes and radiant Meliboean purple dipped in Thessalian dye of shells [and the hues which are displayed] by the golden brood of peacocks steeped in laughing beauty would all be thrown aside surpassed by some new color of things; the smell of myrrh would be despised and the flavors of honey, and the melodies of the swan and Phoebean tunes set off by the varied play of strings would in like sort be suppressed and silenced; for something ever would arise more surpassing than the rest.

All things likewise might fall back into worse states, even as we have said they might advance to better; for reversely too one thing would be more noisome than all other things to nostril, ear, and eye, and taste.

Now since these things are not so, but a fixed limit has been assigned to things which bounds their sum on each side, you must admit that matter also has a finite number of different shapes.

Once more from summer fires to chill frosts a definite path is traced out and in like manner is again traveled back; for every degree of cold and heat and intermediate warmth lie between those extremes, filling up in succession the sum.

Therefore the things produced differ by finite degrees, since at both ends they are marked off by points, one at one, another at the other end, molested

on the one hand by flames, on the other by stiffening frosts.

And now that I have shown this, I will go on to link to it a truth which depends on this and from this draws its proof: the first-beginnings of things which have a like shape one with the other are infinite in number.

For since the difference of forms is finite, those which are like must be infinite or the sum of matter will be finite, which I proved not to be the case, when I showed in my verses that the minute bodies of matter from everlasting continually uphold the sum of things through an uninterrupted succession of blows on all sides.

For though you see that some animals are rarer than others and discern a less fruitful nature in them, yet in another quarter and spot and in distant lands there may be many of that kind and the full tale may be made up; just as we see that in the class of four-footed beasts snake-handed elephants are elsewhere especially numerous;

sicut quadripedum cum primis esse videmus
in genere anguimanus elephantos, India quorum
milibus e multis vallo munitur eburno,
ut penitus nequeat penetrari: tanta ferarum
540 vis est, quarum nos perpauca exempla videmus.
sed tamen id quoque uti concedam, quam lubet esto
unica res quaedam nativo corpore sola,
cui similis toto terrarum non sit, in orbi;
infinita tamen nisi erit vis materiai,
545 unde ea progigni possit concepta, creari
non poterit neque, quod super est, procreescere alicue.
quippe etenim sumant alii finita per omne
corpora iactari unius genitalia rei,
unde ubi qua vi et quo pacto congressa coibunt
550 materiae tanto in pelago turbaque aliena?
non, ut opinor, habent rationem conciliandi:
sed quasi naufragiis magnis multisque coortis
disiactare solet magnum mare transtra cavernas
antennas prorem malos tonsasque natantis,
555 per terrarum omnis oras fluitantia aplustra
ut videantur et indicium mortalibus edant,
infidi maris insidias virisque dolumque
ut vitare velint, neve ullo tempore credant,
subdola cum ridet placidi pellacia ponti,
560 sic tibi si finita semel primordia quaedam
constitues, aevom debebunt sparsa per omnem
disiectare aestus diversi materiai,
numquam in concilium ut possint compulsa coire
nec remorari in concilio nec crescere adaucta;

565 quorum utrumque palam fieri manifesta docet res,
et res progigni et genitas procreare posse.
esse igitur genere in quovis primordia rerum
infinita palam est, unde omnia suppeditantur.
Nec superare queunt motus itaque exitiales
570 perpetuo neque in aeternum sepelire salutem,
nec porro rerum genitales auctificique
motus perpetuo possunt servare creata.
sic aequo geritur certamine principiorum
ex infinito contractum tempore bellum.
575 nunc hic nunc illic superant vitalia rerum
et superantur item. miscetur funere vagor,
quem pueri tollunt visentis luminis oras;
nec nox ulla diem neque noctem aurora secutast,

[537] for India is so fenced about with an ivory rampart made out of many thousands of these, that its inner parts cannot be reached, so great is the quantity of brutes, of which we see but very few samples.

But yet though I should grant this point too: be there even as you will some one thing sole in its kind existing alone with a body that had birth, and let no other thing resemble it in the whole world; yet unless there shall be an infinite supply of matter out of which it may be conceived and brought into being, it cannot be produced, and, more than this, it cannot have growth and food.

For though I should assume this point also that birth-giving bodies of some one thing are tossed about in finite quantity throughout the universe, whence, where, by what force and in what way shall they meet together and combine in so vast a sea, such an alien medley of matter? They have methinks no way of uniting; but even as when great and numerous shipwrecks have occurred, the great sea is wont to tumble about banks, rudders, yards, prow, masts and swimming oars, so that poop-fittings are seen floating about along every shore and utter to mortals a warning to try to shun the snares and violence and guile of the faithless sea, and never at any time to trust to it, when the winning face of calm ocean laughs treacherously; thus too if you shall once decide that certain first-beginnings are finite, different currents of matter must scatter and tumble them about through all time, so that they can never be brought into union and combine, nor abide in any union nor grow up and increase.

But plain matter of fact shows that each of these results manifestly does take place, that things can be brought into being and when begotten advance in growth.

It is clear, then, that in any class you like, the first-beginnings of things are infinite, out of which all supplies are furnished.

Thus neither can death-dealing motions keep the mastery always nor entomb existence for evermore, nor on the other hand can the birth and increase giving motions of things preserve them always after they are born.

Thus the war of first beginnings waged from eternity is carried on with dubious issue: now here, now there, the life-bringing elements of things get the mastery and are overmastered in turn: with the funeral wail blends the cry which babies raise when they enter the borders of light; and no night ever followed day nor morning night that heard not mingling with the sickly infant's cries wailings the attendants on death and black funeral.

quae non audierit mixtos vagitibus aegris
580 ploratus, mortis comites et funeris atri.
Illud in his obsignatum quoque rebus habere
convenit et memori mandatum mente tenere,
nil esse, in promptu quorum natura videtur,
quod genere ex uno consistat principiorum,
585 nec quicquam quod non permixto semine constet.
et quod cumque magis vis multas possidet in se
atque potestates, ita plurima principiorum
in sese genera ac varias docet esse figuras.
Principio tellus habet in se corpora prima,
590 unde mare immensum volventes frigora fontes
adsidue renovent, habet ignes unde oriantur;
nam multis succensa locis ardent sola terrae,
ex imis vero furit ignibus impetus Aetnae.
tum porro nitidas fruges arbustaque laeta
595 gentibus humanis habet unde extollere possit,
unde etiam fluvios frondes et pabula laeta
montivago generi possit praebere ferarum.
quare magna deum mater materque ferarum
et nostri genetrix haec dicta est corporis una.
600 Hanc veteres Graium docti cecinere poetae
sedibus in curru biiugos agitare leones,
aeris in spatio magnam pendere docentes
tellurem neque posse in terra sistere terram.
adiunxere feras, quia quamvis effera proles
605 officiis debet molliri victa parentum.
muralique caput summum cinxere corona,
eximiis munita locis quia sustinet urbes.
quo nunc insigni per magnas praedita terras
horrifice fertur divinae matris imago.
610 hanc variae gentes antiquo more sacrorum
Idaeam vocitant matrem Phrygiasque catervas
dant comites, quia primum ex illis finibus edunt
per terrarum orbes fruges coepisse creari.
Gallos attribuunt, quia, numen qui violarint
615 Matris et ingrati genitoribus inventi sint,

significare volunt indignos esse putandos,
vivam progeniem qui in oras luminis edant.
tympana tenta tonant palmis et cymbala circum
concava, raucisonoque minantur cornua cantu,
620 et Phrygio stimulat numero cava tibia mentis,

[579] And herein it is proper you should keep under seal, and guard, there consigned, in faithful memory this truth, that there is nothing whose nature is apparent to sense which consists of one kind of first-beginnings; nothing which is not formed by a mixing of seed.

And whenever a thing possesses in itself in larger measure many powers and properties, in that measure it shows that there are in it the greatest number of different kinds and varied shapes of first-beginnings.

First of all the earth has in her first bodies out of which springs rolling coolness along replenish without fail the boundless sea, she has bodies out of which fires rise up; for in many spots the earth's crust is on fire and burns, though headstrong Aetna rages with fire of surpassing force.

Then too she has bodies out of which she can raise for mankind goodly crops and joyous trees, out of which too she can supply to the mountain-ranging race of wild beasts rivers leaves and glad pastures.

Wherefore she has alone been named great mother of gods and mother of beasts and parent of our body.

Of her the old and learned poets of the Greeks have sung, that [borne aloft on high-raised] seat in a chariot she drives a pair of lions, teaching that the great earth hangs in the expanse of air and that earth cannot rest on earth.

To her chariot they have yoked wild beasts, because a brood however savage ought to be tamed and softened by the kind offices of parents.

They have encircled the top of her head with a mural crown, because fortified in choice positions she sustains towns; adorned with which emblem the image of the divine mother is carried now-a-days through wide lands in awe-inspiring state.

Her different nations after old-established ritual term Idaean mother, and give for escort Phrygian bands, because they tell that from those lands corn first began to be produced throughout the world.

They assign her *galli*, because they would show by this type that they who have done violence to the divinity of the mother and have proved ungrateful to their parents are to be deemed unworthy to bring a living offspring into the borders of light.

Tight-stretched tambourines and hollow cymbals resound all round to the stroke of their open hands, and horns menace with hoarse-sounding music, and the hollow pipe stirs their minds in Phrygian mood.

telaque praeportant, violenti signa furoris,
ingratos animos atque impia pectora volgi
conterrere metu quae possint numine divae.

ergo cum primum magnas invecta per urbis
625 munificat tacita mortalis muta salute,
aere atque argento sternunt iter omne viarum
largifica stipe ditantes ninguntque rosarum
floribus umbrantes matrem comitumque catervam.
hic armata manus, Curetas nomine Grai
630 quos memorant, Phrygias inter si forte catervas
ludunt in numerumque exultant sanguine laeti
terrificas capitum quatientes numine cristas,
Dictaeos referunt Curetas, qui Iovis illum
vagitum in Creta quondam occultasse feruntur,
635 cum pueri circum puerum pernice chorea
armat et in numerum pernice chorea
armati in numerum pulsarent aeribus aera,
ne Saturnus eum malis mandaret adeptus
aeternumque daret matri sub pectore volnus.
640 propterea magnam armati matrem comitantur,
aut quia significant divam praedicere ut armis
ac virtute velint patriam defendere terram
praesidioque parent decorique parentibus esse.
quae bene et eximie quamvis disposta ferantur,
645 longe sunt tamen a vera ratione repulsa.
omnis enim per se divom natura necessest
inmortali aevo summa cum pace fruatur
semota ab nostris rebus seiunctaque longe;
nam privata dolore omni, privata periclis,
650 ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri,
nec bene promeritis capitur neque tangitur ira.
terra quidem vero caret omni tempore sensu,
et quia multarum potitur primordia rerum,
multa modis multis effert in lumina solis.
655 hic siquis mare Neptunum Cereremque vocare
constituet fruges et Bacchi nomine abuti
mavolt quam laticis proprium proferre vocamen,
concedamus ut hic terrarum dictitet orbem
esse deum matrem, dum vera re tamen ipse
660 religione animum turpi contingere parcat.
Saepe itaque ex uno tondentes gramina campo
lanigerae pecudes et equorum duellica proles
buceriaeque greges eodem sub tegmine caeli
ex unoque sitim sedantes flumine aquai
dissimili vivont specie retinentque parentum
665 naturam et mores generatim quaeque imitantur.

[621] They carry weapons before them, emblems of furious rage, meet to fill the thankless souls and godless breasts of the rabble with terror for the divinity of the goddess.

Therefore when first borne in procession through great cities she mutely enriches mortals with a blessing not expressed in words, they straw all her path with brass and silver presenting her with bounteous alms, and scatter over her a snow-shower of roses, overshadowing the mother and her troops of attendants.

Here an armed band to which the Greeks give the name of Phrygian Curetes, in that it haply joins in the game of arms and springs up in measure all dripping with blood, shaking with its nodding the frightful crests upon the head, represents the Dictæan Curetes who, as the story is, erst drowned in Crete that infant cry of Jove, when the young band about the young babe in rapid dance arms in hand to measured tread beat brass on brass, that Saturn might not get him to consign to his devouring jaws and stab the mother to the heart with a never-healing wound.

For these reasons they escort in arms the great mother, or else because they mean by this sign that the goddess preaches to men to be willing with arms and valor to defend their country and be ready to be a safeguard and an ornament to their parents.

All which, well and beautifully as it is set forth and told, is yet widely removed from true reason.

For the nature of gods must ever in itself of necessity enjoy immortality together with supreme of repose, far removed and withdrawn from our concerns; since exempt from every pain, exempt from all dangers, strong in its own resources, not wanting aught of us, it is neither gained by favors nor moved by anger.

And here if any one thinks proper to call the sea Neptune and corn Ceres and chooses rather to misuse the name of Bacchus than to utter the term that belongs to that liquor, let us allow him to declare that the earth is mother of the gods, if he only forbear in earnest to stain his mind with foul religion.

The earth however is at all times without feeling, and because it receives into it the first— beginnings of many things, it brings them forth in many ways into the light of the sun.

And so the woolly flocks and the martial breed of horses and homed herds, though often cropping the grass from one field beneath the same canopy of heaven and slaking their thirst from one stream of water, yet have all their life a dissimilar appearance and retain the nature of their parents and severally imitate their ways each after its kind:

tanta est in quovis genere herbae material
dissimilis ratio, tanta est in flumine quoque.
Hinc porro quamvis animantem ex omnibus unam
ossa cruor venae calor umor viscera nervi

670 constituunt, quae sunt porro distantia longe,
 dissimili perfecta figura principiorum.
 Tum porro quae cumque igni flammata cremantur.
 si nil praeterea, tamen haec in corpore tradunt,
 unde ignem iacere et lumen submittere possint
 675 scintillasque agere ac late differre favillam.
 cetera consimili mentis ratione peragrans
 invenies igitur multarum semina rerum
 corpore celare et varias cohibere figuras.
 Denique multa vides, quibus et color et sapor una
 reddita sunt cum odore in primis pleraque poma.
 haec igitur variis debent constare figuris;
 nidor enim penetrat qua fucus non it in artus,
 fucus item sorsum, sorsum sapor insinuat
 685 sensibus; ut noscas primis differre figuris.
 dissimiles igitur formae glomeramen in unum
 conveniunt et res permixto semine constant.
 Quin etiam passim nostris in versibus ipsis
 multa elementa vides multis communia verbis,
 690 cum tamen inter se versus ac verba necesse est
 confiteare alia ex aliis constare elementis;
 non quo multa parum communis littera currat
 aut nulla inter se duo sint ex omnibus isdem,
 sed quia non volgo paria omnibus omnia constant.
 695 sic aliis in rebus item communia multa
 multarum rerum cum sint, primordia rerum
 dissimili tamen inter se consistere summa
 possunt; ut merito ex aliis constare feratur
 humanum genus et fruges arbustaque laeta.
 700 Nec tamen omnimodis conecti posse putandum est
 omnia; nam volgo fieri portenta videres,
 semiferas hominum species existere et altos
 inter dum ramos eigni corpore vivo
 multaque conecti terrestria membra marinis,
 705 tum flammam taetro spirantis ore Chimaeras
 pascere naturam per terras omniparentis.

[665] so great is the diversity of matter in any kind of herbage, so great in every river.

And hence, too, any one you please out of the whole number of living creatures is made up of bones, blood, vein, heat, moisture, flesh, sinews; and these things again differ widely from one another and are composed of first-beginnings of unlike shape.

Furthermore whatever things are set on fire and burned, store up in their

body, if nothing else, at least those particles, out of which they may radiate fire and send out light and make sparks fly and scatter embers all about.

If you will go over all other things by a like process of reasoning, you will thus find that they conceal in their body the seeds of many things and contain elements of various shapes.

Again you see many things to which are given at once both color and taste together with smell; especially those many offerings [which are burned on the altars].

These must therefore be made up of elements of different shapes; for smell enters in where color passes not into the frame, color too in one way, taste in another makes its entrance into the senses; so that you know they differ in the shapes of their first elements.

Therefore unlike forms unite into one mass and things are made up of a mixture of seed.

Throughout moreover these very verses of ours you see many elements common to many words, though yet you must admit that the verses and words one with another are different and composed of different elements; not that but few letters which are in common run through them or that no two words or verses one with another are made up entirely of the same, but because as a rule they do not all resemble one the other.

Thus also though in other things there are many first-beginnings common to many things, yet they can make up one with the other a quite dissimilar whole; so that men and corn and joyous trees may fairly be said to consist of different elements.

And yet we are not to suppose that all things can be joined together in all ways; for then you would see prodigies produced on all hands, forms springing up half man half beast and sometimes tall boughs sprouting from the living body, and many limbs of land-creatures joined with those of sea-animals, nature too throughout the all-bearing lands feeding chimeras which breathed flames from noisome mouth.

quorum nil fieri manifestum est, omnia quando
seminibus certis certa genetrice creata
conservare genus crescentia posse videmus.

710 scilicet id certa fieri ratione necessust.
nam sua cuique cibus ex omnibus intus in artus
corpora discedunt conexaque convenientis
efficiunt motus; at contra aliena videmus
reicere in terras naturam, multaque caecis

715 corporibus fugiunt e corpore percita plagis,
quae neque conecti quoquam potuere neque intus
vitalis motus consentire atque imitari.
sed ne forte putes animalia sola teneri
legibus his, quaedam ratio res terminat omnis

720 nam vel uti tota natura dissimiles sunt
 inter se genitae res quaeque, ita quamque necessest
 dissimili constare figura principiorum;
 non quo multa parum simili sint praedita forma,
 sed quia non volgo paria omnibus omnia constant.
 725 semina cum porro distent, differre necessust
 intervalla vias conexus pondera plagas
 concursus motus; quae non animalia solum
 corpora seiungunt, sed terras ac mare totum
 secernunt caelumque a terris omne retentant.
 730 Nunc age dicta meo dulci quaesita labore
 percipe, ne forte haec albis ex alba rearis
 principiis esse, ante oculos quae candida cernis,
 aut ea quae nigrant nigro de semine nata;
 nive alium quemvis quae sunt inbuta colorem,
 735 propterea gerere hunc credas, quod materiai
 corpora consimili sint eius tincta colore;
 nullus enim color est omnino materiai
 corporibus, neque par rebus neque denique dispar.
 in quae corpora si nullus tibi forte videtur
 740 posse animi iniectus fieri, procul avius erras.
 nam cum caecigeni, solis qui lumina numquam
 dispexere, tamen cognoscant corpora tactu
 ex ineunte aevo nullo coniuncta colore,
 scire licet nostrae quoque menti corpora posse
 745 vorti in notitiam nullo circum lita fuco.
 denique nos ipsi caecis quaecumque tenebris
 tangimus, haud ullo sentimus tincta colore.
 Quod quoniam vinco fieri, nunc esse docebo.

[706] It is plain however that nothing of the sort is done, since we see that all things produced from fixed seeds and a fixed mother can in growing preserve the marks of their kind.

This you are to know must take place after a fixed law.

For the particles suitable for each thing from all kinds of food when inside the body pass into the frame and joining on produce the appropriate motions; but on the other hand we see nature throw out on the earth those that are alien, and many things with their unseen bodies fly out of the body impelled by blows: those I mean which have not been able to join on to any part nor when inside to feel in unison with and adopt the vital motions.

But lest you haply suppose that living things alone are bound by these conditions, such a law keeps all things within their limits.

For even as things begotten are in their whole nature all unlike one the other, thus each must consist of first-beginnings of unlike shape; not that a

scanty number are possessed of a like form, but because as a rule they do not all resemble one the other.

Again since the seeds differ, there must be a difference in the spaces between, the passages, the connections, the weights, the blows, the clashing, the motions; all which not only disjoin living bodies, but hold apart the lands and the whole sea, and keep all heaven away from the earth.

Now mark, and apprehend precepts amassed by my welcome toil, lest haply you deem that those things which you see with your eyes to be bright, because white are formed of white principles, or that the things which are black are born from black seed, or that things which are steeped in any other color bear that color because the bodies of matter are dyed with a color like to it.

For the bodies of matter have no color at all either like to the things or unlike.

But if haply it seems to you that no impression of the mind can throw itself into these bodies, you wander far astray.

For since men born blind who have never beheld the light of the sun, yet recognize bodies by touch, though linked with no color for them from their first birth, you are to know that bodies can fall under the ken of our mind too, though stained with no color. Again, whatever things we ourselves touch in the thick darkness, we do not perceive to be dyed with any color.

And since I prove that this is the case, I will now show that there are things [which are possessed of no color].

omnis enim color omnino mutatur in omnis;
750 quod facere haud ullo debent primordia pacto;
immutabile enim quiddam superare necessest,
ne res ad nihilum redigantur funditus omnes;
nam quod cumque suis mutatum finibus exit,
continuo hoc mors est illius quod fuit ante.

755 proinde colore cave contingas semina rerum,
ne tibi res redeant ad nihilum funditus omnes.

Praeterea si nulla coloris principiis est
reddita natura et variis sunt praedita formis,
e quibus omnigenus gignunt variantque colores,

760 propterea magni quod refert, semina quaeque
cum quibus et quali positura contineantur
et quos inter se dent motus accipiantque,
perfacile extemplo rationem reddere possis,
cur ea quae nigro fuerint paulo ante colore,

765 marmoreo fieri possint candore repente,
ut mare, cum magni commorunt aequora venti,
vertitur in canos candenti marmore fluctus;
dicere enim possis, nigrum quod saepe videmus,

materies ubi permixta est illius et ordo
770 principiis mutatus et addita demptaque quaedam,
continuo id fieri ut candens videatur et album.
quod si caeruleis constarent aequora ponti
seminibus, nullo possent albescere pacto;
nam quo cumque modo perturbes caerulea quae sint,
775 numquam in marmoreum possunt migrare colorem.
sin alio atque alio sunt semina tincta colore,
quae maris efficiunt unum purumque nitorem,
ut saepe ex aliis formis variisque figuris
efficitur quiddam quadratum unaque figura,
780 conveniebat, ut in quadrato cernimus esse
dissimiles formas, ita cernere in aequore ponti
aut alio in quovis uno puroque nitore
dissimiles longe inter se variosque colores.
praeterea nihil efficiunt obstantque figurae
785 dissimiles, quo quadratum minus omne sit extra;
at varii rerum inpediunt prohibentque colores,
quo minus esse uno possit res tota nitore.
Tum porro quae ducit et inlicit ut tribuamus
principiis rerum non numquam causa colores,
790 occidit, ex albis quoniam non alba creantur,
nec quae nigra cluent de nigris, sed variis ex.

[749] Well any color without any exception changes into any other; and this first-beginnings ought in no wise to do: something unchangeable must remain over, that all things be not utterly reduced to nothing.

For whenever a thing changes and quits its proper limits, at once this change of state is the death of that which it was before.

Therefore mind not to dye with color the seeds of things, that you may not have all things altogether returning to nothing.

Moreover, if no quality of color is assigned to first-beginnings and they are yet possessed of varied shapes out of which they beget colors of every kind and change them about by reason that it makes a great difference with what other seeds and in what position the seeds are severally held in union and what motions they mutually impart and receive, you can explain at once with the greatest ease why those things which just before were of a black color, may become all at once of marble whiteness; as the sea, when mighty winds have stirred up its waters, is changed into white waves of the brightness of marble: you may say that when the matter of that which we often see to be black has been mixed up anew and the arrangement of its first-beginnings has been changed and some have been added and some been taken away, the immediate result is that it appears bright and white.

But if the waters of the sea consisted of azure seeds, they could in no wise

become white; for however much you jumble together seeds which are azure, they can never pass into a marble color.

But if the seeds which make up the one unmixed brightness of the sea are dyed some with one, some with other colors, just as often out of different forms and varied shapes something square and of a uniform figure is made up, in that case it were natural that as we see unlike forms contained in the square, so we should see in the water of the sea or in any other one and unmixed brightness colors widely unlike and different to one another.

Moreover the unlike figures do not in the least hinder or prevent the whole figure from being a square on the outside; but the various colors of things are a let and hindrance to the whole things being of a uniform brightness.

Then too the reason which leads and draws us on sometimes to assign colors to the first-beginnings of things, falls to the ground, since white things are not produced from white, nor those which are black from black, but out of things of various colors.

quippe etenim multo proclivius exorientur
candida de nullo quam nigro nata colore
aut alio quovis, qui contra pugnet et obstat.

⁷⁹⁵ Praeterea quoniam nequeunt sine luce colores
esse neque in lucem existunt primordia rerum,
scire licet quam sint nullo velata colore;
qualis enim caecis poterit color esse tenebris?
lumine quin ipso mutatur propterea quod

⁸⁰⁰ recta aut obliqua percussus luce refulget;
pluma columbarum quo pacto in sole videtur,
quae sita cervices circum collumque coronat;
namque alias fit uti claro sit rubra pyropo,
inter dum quodam sensu fit uti videatur

⁸⁰⁵ inter caeruleum viridis miscere zmaragdus.
caudaque pavonis, larga cum luce repleta est,
consimili mutat ratione obversa colores;
qui quoniam quodam gignuntur luminis ictu,
scire licet, sine eo fieri non posse putandum est.

⁸¹⁰ Et quoniam plagae quoddam genus excipit in se
pupula, cum sentire colorem dicitur album,
atque aliud porro, nigrum cum et cetera sentit,
nec refert ea quae tangas quo forte colore
praedita sint, verum quali magis apta figura,

⁸¹⁵ scire licet nihil principiis opus esse colore,
sed variis formis variantes edere tactus.

Praeterea quoniam non certis certa figuris
est natura coloris et omnia principiorum
formamenta queunt in quovis esse nitore,

820 cur ea quae constant ex illis non pariter sunt
omnigenus perfusa coloribus in genere omni?
conveniebat enim corvos quoque saepe volantis
ex albis album pinnis iactare colorem
et nigros fieri nigro de semine cycnos
825 aut alio quovis uno varioque colore.

Quin etiam quanto in partes res quaeque minutas
distrahitur magis, hoc magis est ut cernere possis
evanescere paulatim stinguique colorem;
ut fit ubi in parvas partis discerpitur austrum:

[790] For white things will much more readily rise up and be born from no color than from a black or any other color which thwarts and opposes it.

Moreover since colors cannot exist without light and first-beginnings of things do not come out into the light, you may be sure they are clothed with no color.

For what color can there be in total darkness? Nay it changes in the light itself according as its brightness comes from a straight or slanting stroke of light.

After this fashion the down which encircles and crowns the nape and throat of doves shows itself in the sun: at one time it is ruddy with the hue of bright pyropus; at another it appears by a certain way of looking at it to blend with coral-red green emeralds.

The tail of the peacock when it is saturated with abundant light, changes in like fashion its colors as it turns about.

And since these colors are begotten by a certain stroke of light, sure enough you must believe that they cannot be produced without it.

And since the pupil receives into it a kind of blow, when it is said to perceive a white color, and then another, when it perceives black or any other colour, and since it is of no moment with what color the things which you touch are provided, but rather with what sort of shape they are furnished, you are to know that first-beginnings have no need of colors, but give forth sensations of touch varying according to their various shapes.

Moreover since no particular kind of color is assigned to particular shapes and every configuration of first-beginnings can exist in any color, why on a 'like principle are not the things which are formed out of them in every kind overlaid with colors of every kind? For then it were natural that crows too in flying should often display a white color from whitewings and that swans should come to be black from a black seed, or of any other different color you please.

Again the more minute the parts are into which anything is rent, the more you may perceive the color fade away by little and little and become extinct; as for instance if a piece of purple is torn into small shreds: when it has been plucked into separate threads, the purple, and the scarlet far the most brilliant

of colors, are quite effaced;

830 purpura poeniceusque color clarissimus multo,
filatim cum distractum est, disperditur omnis;
noscere ut hinc possis prius omnem efflare colorem
particulas, quam discedant ad semina rerum.
Postremo quoniam non omnia corpora vocem
835 mittere concedis neque odorem, propterea fit
ut non omnibus adtribuas sonitus et odores:
sic oculis quoniam non omnia cernere quimus,
scire licet quaedam tam constare orba colore
quam sine odore ullo quaedam sonituque remota,
840 nec minus haec animum cognoscere posse sagacem
quam quae sunt aliis rebus privata notare.
Sed ne forte putes solo spoliata colore
corpora prima manere, etiam secreta teporis
sunt ac frigoris omnino calidique vaporis,
845 et sonitu sterila et sucoieiuna feruntur,
nec iaciunt ullum proprium de corpore odorem.
sicut amaracini blandum stactaeque liquorem
et nardi florem, nectar qui naribus halat,
cum facere instituas, cum primis quaerere par est,
850 quod licet ac possis reperire, inolentis olivi
naturam, nullam quae mittat naribus auram,
quam minime ut possit mixtos in corpore odores
concoctosque suo contractans perdere viro,
propter eandem rem debent primordia rerum
855 non adhibere suum gignundis rebus odorem
nec sonitum, quoniam nihil ab se mittere possunt,
nec simili ratione saporem denique quemquam
nec frigus neque item calidum tepidumque vaporem,
cetera, quae cum ita sunt tamen ut mortalia constent,
860 molli lenta, fragosa putri, cava corpore raro,
omnia sint a principiis seiuncta necessest,
immortalia si volumus subiungere rebus
fundamenta, quibus nitatur summa salutis;
ne tibi res redeant ad nihilum funditus omnes.
865 Nunc ea quae sentire videmus cumque necessest
ex insensilibus tamen omnia confiteare
principiis constare. neque id manifesta refutant
nec contra pugnant, in promptu cognita quae sunt,
sed magis ipsa manu ducunt et credere cogunt
870 ex insensilibus, quod dico, animalia gigni.

before they come back to the seeds of things.

Lastly, since you admit that all bodies do not utter a voice nor emit a smell, for this reason you do not assign sounds and smells to all.

So also since we cannot perceive all things with the eyes, you are to know that some things are as much denuded of color as others are without smell and devoid of sound, and that the keen discerning mind can just as well apprehend these things as it can take note of things which are destitute of other qualities.

But lest haply you suppose that first bodies remain stripped of color alone, they are also wholly devoid of warmth and cold and violent heat, and are judged to be barren of sound and drained of moisture, and emit from their body no scent of their own.

Just as when you set about preparing the balmy liquid of sweet marjoram and myrrh and the flower of spikenard which gives forth to the nostrils a scent like nectar, before all you should seek, so far as you may and can find it, the substance of scentless oil, such as gives out no perfume to the nostrils, that it may as little as possible meddle with and destroy by its own pungency the odors mixed in its body and boiled up with it; for the same reason the first-beginnings of things must not bring to the begetting of things a smell or sound of their own, since they cannot discharge anything from themselves, and for the same reason no taste either nor cold nor any heat moderate or violent, and the like.

For as these things, be they what they may, are still such as to be liable to death, whether pliant with a soft, brittle with a crumbling, or hollow with a porous body, they must all be withdrawn from the first beginnings, if we wish to assign to things imperishable foundations for the whole sum of existence to rest upon: that you may not have things returning altogether to nothing.

To come to another point, whatever things we perceive to have sense, you must yet admit all composed of senseless first-beginnings: manifest tokens which are open to all to apprehend, so far from refuting or contradicting this, do rather themselves take us by the hand and constrain us to believe that, as I say, living things are begotten from senseless things.

quippe videre licet vivos existere vermes
stercore de taetro, putorem cum sibi nacta est
intempestivis ex imbribus umida tellus.

Praeterea cunctas itidem res vertere sese.

875 vertunt se fluvii in frondes et pabula laeta
in pecudes, vertunt pecudes in corpora nostra
naturam, et nostro de corpore saepe ferarum
augescunt vires et corpora pennipotentum.

ergo omnes natura cibos in corpora viva

880 vertit et hinc sensus animantum procreat omnes,
non alia longe ratione atque arida ligna
explicat in flammis et in ignis omnia versat.

iamne vides igitur magni primordia rerum
referre in quali sint ordine quaeque locata
885 et commixta quibus dent motus accipiantque?
Tum porro, quid id est, animum quod percutit, ipsum,
quod movet et varios sensus expromere cogit,
ex insensilibus ne credas sensile gigni?
ni mirum lapides et ligna et terra quod una
890 mixta tamen nequeunt vitalem reddere sensum.
illud in his igitur rebus meminisse decebit,
non ex omnibus omnino, quaecumque creant res
sensilia, extemplo me gigni dicere sensus,
sed magni referre ea primum quantula constant,
895 sensile quae faciunt, et qua sint praedita forma,
motibus ordinibus posituris denique quae sint.
quarum nil rerum in lignis glaebisque videmus;
et tamen haec, cum sunt quasi putrefacta per imbres,
vermiculos pariunt, quia corpora materialia
900 antiquis ex ordinibus permota nova re
conciliantur ita ut debent animalia gigni.
Deinde ex sensilibus qui sensile posse creari
constituunt, porro ex aliis sentire sueti

* * *

molliam cum faciunt; nam sensus iungitur omnis
visceribus nervis venis, quae cumque videmus
molliam mortali consistere corpore creta.
sed tamen esto iam posse haec aeterna manere;
nempe tamen debent aut sensum partis habere
aut similis totis animalibus esse putari.
910 at nequeant per se partes sentire necesse est:

[871] We may see in fact living worms spring out of stinking dung, when the soaked earth has gotten putridity after excessive rains; and all things besides change in the same way: rivers leaves and glad pastures change into cattle, cattle change their substance into our bodies, and often out of these the powers of wild beasts and the bodies of the strong of wing are increased.

Therefore nature changes all foods into living bodies and engenders out of them all the senses of living creatures, much in the same way as she dissolves dry woods into flames and converts all things into fires.

Now do you see that it is of great moment in what sort of arrangement the first-beginnings of things are severally placed and with what others they are mixed up, when they impart and receive motions? Then again what is that which strikes your mind, affects that mind and constrains it to give utterance to many different thoughts, to save you from believing that the sensible is

begotten out of senseless things? Sure enough it is because stones and wood and earth however mixed together are yet unable to produce vital sense.

This therefore it will be well to remember herein, that I do not assert that the sensible and sensations are forthwith begotten out of all elements without exception which produce things; but that it is of great moment first how minute the particles are which make up the sensible thing and then what shape they possess and what in short they are in their motions arrangements and positions.

None of which conditions we find in woods and clods; and yet even these when they have so to speak become rotten through the rains bring forth worms, because bodies of matter driven from their ancient arrangements by a new condition are combined in the manner needed for the begetting of living creatures.

Next they who hold that the sensible can be produced out of sensible elements, accustomed thus to derive their own sense from elements [which are sensible] in their turn, [do thus render their own seeds mortal,] when they make them soft; for all sense is bound up with flesh, sinews and veins; which in everything ye see to be soft and formed of a mortal body.

But even suppose that these things can remain eternal: they must yet I presume either have the sense of some part or else be deemed to possess a sense similar to the entire living creatures.

namque animus sensus membrorum respuit omnis,
nec manus a nobis potis est secreta neque ulla
corporis omnino sensum pars sola tenere.
linquitur ut totis animantibus adsimulentur,
915 vitali ut possint consentire undique sensu.
qui poterunt igitur rerum primordia dici
et leti vitare vias, animalia cum sint,
atque animalia sint mortalibus una eademque?
quod tamen ut possint, at coetu concilioque
920 nil facient praeter volgum turbamque animantum,
scilicet ut nequeant homines armenta feraeque
inter sese ullam rem gignere conveniundo.
sic itidem quae sentimus sentire necessest.
quod si forte suum dimittunt corpore sensum
925 atque alium capiunt, quid opus fuit adtribui id quod
detrahitur? tum praeterea, quod fudimus ante,
quatinus in pullos animalis vertier ova
cernimus alituum vermisque effervere terra,
intempestivos quam putor cepit ob imbris,
930 scire licet gigni posse ex non sensibus sensus.
Quod si forte aliquis dicet, dum taxat oriri
posse ex non sensu sensus mutabilitate,

aut aliquo tamquam partu quod proditur extra,
huic satis illud erit planum facere atque probare,
935 non fieri partum nisi concilio ante coacto,
nec quicquam commutari sine conciliatu.
Principio nequeunt ullius corporis esse
sensus ante ipsam genitam naturam animantis,
ni mirum quia materies disiecta tenetur
940 aere fluminibus terris terraque creatis,
nec congressa modo vitalis convenientes
contulit inter se motus, quibus omnituentes
accensi sensus animantem quamque tuentur.
Praeterea quamvis animantem grandior ictus,
945 quam patitur natura, repente adfligit et omnis
corporis atque animi pergit confundere sensus.
dissoluuntur enim positurae principiorum
et penitus motus vitales inpediuntur,
donec materies omnis concussa per artus
950 vitalis animae nodos a corpore solvit
dispersamque foras per caulas eiecit omnis;

[910] But the parts cannot possibly have sense by themselves alone; for all sense of the different members has reference to something else; nor can the hand when severed from us nor any other part of the body whatever by itself maintain sensation.

It remains to assume that they resemble the entire living creatures.

In this case it is necessary that they should feel the things which we feel in the same way as we do, in order that they may be able in all points to work in concert with the vital sense.

How then can they be called first-beginnings of things and shun the paths of death, seeing that they are living things, and that living things are one and the same with mortal things?

Nay, granting they could do this, yet by their meeting and union they will make nothing but a jumble and medley of living things; just you are to know as men cattle and wild beasts would be unable to beget any other thing by all their mixing with one another.

But if haply they lose from their body their own sense and adopt another, what use was it to assign what is again withdrawn? Moreover, the instance to which we had before recourse, inasmuch as we see the eggs of fowls change into living chicks and worms burst forth, when putridity has seized on the earth after excessive rains, you are to know that sensations can be begotten out of no-sensations.

But if haply any one shall say that sense so far may arise from no-sensation by a process of change, or because it is brought forth by a kind of birth, it will be enough to make plain and to prove to him that no birth takes place until a

union of elements has first been effected, and that nothing changes without their having been united.

Above all senses cannot exist in any body before the nature of the living thing itself has been begotten because sure enough the matter remains scattered about in air, rivers, earth, and things produced from earth, and has not met together and combined in appropriate fashion the vital motions by which the all-discerning senses are kindled into action in each living thing.

Again a blow more severe than its nature can endure, prostrates at once any living thing and goes on to stun all the senses of body and mind.

For the positions of the first-beginnings are broken up and the vital motions entirely stopped, until the matter, disordered by the shock through the whole frame, unties from the body the vital fastenings of the soul and scatters it abroad and forces it out through all the pores.

nam quid praeterea facere ictum posse reamur
oblatum, nisi discutere ac dissolvere quaeque?
fit quoque uti soleant minus oblato acriter ictu
955 reliqui motus vitalis vincere saepe,
vincere et ingentis plagae sedare tumultus
inque suos quicquid rursus revocare meatus
et quasi iam leti dominantem in corpore motum
discutere ac paene amissos accendere sensus;
960 nam qua re potius leti iam limine ab ipso
ad vitam possint conlecta mente reverti,
quam quo decursum prope iam siet ire et abire?
Praeterea, quoniam dolor est, ubi materiai
corpora vi quadam per viscera viva per artus
965 sollicitata suis trepidant in sedibus intus,
inque locum quando remigrant, fit blanda voluptas,
scire licet nullo primordia posse dolore
temptari nullamque voluptatem capere ex se;
quandoquidem non sunt ex ullis principiorum
970 corporibus, quorum motus novitate laborent
aut aliquem fructum capiant dulcedinis almae.
haut igitur debent esse ullo praedita sensu.
Denique uti possint sentire animalia quaeque,
principiis si iam est sensus tribuendus eorum,
975 quid, genus humanum proprium de quibus auctumst?
scilicet et risu tremulo concussa cachinnant
et lacrimis spargunt rorantibus ora genasque
multaque de rerum mixtura dicere callent
et sibi proporro quae sint primordia quaerunt;
980 quando quidem totis mortalibus adsimulata
ipsa quoque ex aliis debent constare elementis,

inde alia ex aliis, nusquam consistere ut ausis;
quippe sequar, quod cumque loqui ridereque dices
et sapere, ex aliis eadem haec facientibus ut sit.
985 quod si delira haec furiosaque cernimus esse
et ridere potest non ex ridentibus auctus,
et sapere et doctis rationem reddere dictis
non ex seminibus sapientibus atque disertis,
qui minus esse queant ea quae sentire videmus
990 seminibus permixta carentibus undique sensu?

[950] For what more can we suppose the infliction of a blow can do, than shake from their place and break up the union of the several elements?

Often too when the blow is inflicted with less violence, the remaining vital motions are wont to prevail, ay, prevail and still the huge disorders caused by the blow and recall each part into its proper channels and shake off the motion of death now reigning as it were paramount in the body and kindle afresh the almost lost senses.

For in what other way should the thing be able to gather together its powers of mind and come back to life from the very threshold of death, rather than pass on to the goal to which it had almost run and so pass away? Again since there is pain when the bodies of matter are disordered by any force throughout the living flesh and frame, and quake in their seats within, and as when they travel back into their place, a soothing pleasure ensues, you are to know that first-beginnings can be assailed by no pain and can derive no pleasure from themselves; since they are not formed of any bodies of first-beginnings, so as to be distressed by any novelty in their motion or derive from it any fruit of fostering delight; and therefore they must not be possessed of any sense.

Again if in order that living creatures may severally have sense, sense is to be assigned to their first-beginnings as well, what are we to say of those of which mankind is specifically made?

Sure enough they burst into fits of shaking laughter and sprinkle with dewy tears face and cheeks and have the cunning to say much about the composition of things and to inquire next what their own first-beginnings are; since like in their natures to the entire mortals they must in their turn be formed out of other elements, then those others out of others, so that you can venture nowhere to come to a stop: yes, whatever you shall say speaks and laughs and thinks, I will press you with the argument that it is formed of other things performing these same acts.

But if we see these notions to be sheer folly and madness, and a man may laugh though not made of laughing things, and think and reason in learned language though not formed of thoughtful and eloquent seeds, why cannot the things which we see to have sense, just as well be made up of a mixture of things altogether devoid of sense?

Denique caelesti sumus omnes semine oriundi;
 omnibus ille idem pater est, unde alma liquentis
 umoris guttas mater cum terra recepit,
 feta parit nitidas fruges arbustaque laeta
 995 et genus humanum, parit omnia saecula ferarum,
 pabula cum praebet, quibus omnes corpora pascunt
 et dulcem ducunt vitam prolemque propagant;
 qua propter merito maternum nomen adepta est.
 cedit item retro, de terra quod fuit ante,
 1000 in terras, et quod missumst ex aetheris oris,
 id rursum caeli rellatum templa receptant.
 nec sic interemit mors res ut material
 corpora conficiat, sed coetum dissipat ollis;
 inde aliis aliud coniungit et efficit, omnis
 1005 res ut convertant formas mutentque colores
 et capiant sensus et puncto tempore reddant;
 ut noscas referre earum primordia rerum
 cum quibus et quali positura contineantur
 et quos inter se dent motus accipiantque,
 1010 neve putes aeterna penes residere potesse
 corpora prima quod in summis fluitare videmus
 rebus et interdum nasci subitoque perire.
 quin etiam refert nostris in versibus ipsis
 cum quibus et quali sint ordine quaeque locata;
 1015 namque eadem caelum mare terras flumina solem
 significant, eadem fruges arbusta animantis;
 si non omnia sunt, at multo maxima pars est
 consimilis; verum positura discrepant res.
 sic ipsis in rebus item iam material
 1020 intervalla vias conexus pondera plagas
 concursus motus ordo positura figurae
 cum permutantur, mutari res quoque debent.
 Nunc animum nobis adhibe veram ad rationem.
 nam tibi vehementer nova res molitur ad auris
 1025 accedere et nova se species ostendere rerum.
 sed neque tam facilis res ulla est, quin ea primum
 difficilis magis ad credendum constet, itemque
 nil adeo magnum neque tam mirabile quicquam,
 quod non paulatim minuant mirarier omnes,
 1030 principio caeli clarum purumque colorem
 quaeque in se cohibet, palantia sidera passim,
 lunamque et solis praeclara luce nitorem;

father, by whom mother earth the giver of increase, when she has taken in from him liquid drops of moisture, conceives and bears goodly crops and joyous trees and the race of man, bears all kinds of brute beasts, in that she supplies food with which all feed their bodies and lead a pleasant life and continue their race; wherefore with good cause she has gotten the name of mother.

That also which before was from the earth, passes back into the earth, and that which was sent from the borders of ether, is carried back and taken in again by the quarters of heaven.

Death does not extinguish things in such way as to destroy the bodies of matter, but only breaks up the union amongst them, and then joins anew the different elements with others; and thus it comes to pass that all things change their shapes and alter their colors and receive sensations and in a moment yield them up; so that from all this you may know it matters much with what others and in what position the same first-beginnings of things are held in union and what motions they do mutually impart and receive, and you must not suppose that that which we see floating about on the surface of things and now born, then at once perishing, can be a property inherent in everlasting first bodies.

Nay in our verses themselves it matters much with what other elements and in what kind of order the several elements are placed.

If not all, yet by far the greatest number are alike; but the totals composed of them are made to differ by the position of these elements.

Thus in actual things, as well, when the clashing of motions, arrangement, position and shapes of matter change about, the things must also change.

Apply now, we entreat, your mind to true reason.

For a new question struggles earnestly to gain your ears, a new aspect of things to display itself.

But there is nothing so easy as not to be at first more difficult to believe than afterwards; and nothing, too so great, so marvelous, that all do not gradually abate their admiration of it.

Look up at the bright and unsullied hue of heaven and the stars which it holds within it, wandering all about, and the moon and the sun's light of dazzling brilliancy:

omnia quae nunc si primum mortalibus essent
ex improvise si sint obiecta repente,
¹⁰³⁵ quid magis his rebus poterat mirabile dici,
aut minus ante quod auderent fore credere gentes?
nil, ut opinor; ita haec species miranda fuisset.
quam tibi iam nemo fessus satiate videndi,
suspiciere in caeli dignatur lucida templa.
¹⁰⁴⁰ desine qua propter novitate exterritus ipsa
expuere ex animo rationem, sed magis acri

iudicio perpende, et si tibi vera videntur,
dede manus, aut, si falsum est, accingere contra.
quaerit enim rationem animus, cum summa loci sit
1045 infinita foris haec extra moenia mundi,
quid sit ibi porro, quo prospicere usque velit mens
atque animi iactus liber quo pervolet ipse.
Principio nobis in cunctas undique partis
et latere ex utroque supra supterque per omne
1050 nulla est finis; uti docui, res ipsaque per se
vociferatur, et elucet natura profundi.
nullo iam pacto veri simile esse putandumst,
undique cum vorsum spatium vacet infinitum
seminaque innumero numero summaque profunda
1055 multimodis volitent aeterno percita motu,
hunc unum terrarum orbem caelumque creatum,
nil agere illa foris tot corpora materiai;
cum praesertim hic sit natura factus et ipsa
sponte sua forte offensando semina rerum
1060 multimodis temere in cassum frustraue coacta
tandem coluerunt ea quae coniecta repente
magnarum rerum fierent exordia semper,
terrai maris et caeli generisque animantum.
quare etiam atque etiam talis fateare necesse est
1065 esse alios alibi congressus materiai,
qualis hic est, avido complexu quem tenet aether.
Praeterea cum materies est multa parata,
cum locus est praesto nec res nec causa moratur
ulla, geri debent ni mirum et confieri res.
1070 nunc et seminibus si tanta est copia, quantam
enumerare aetas animantum non queat omnis,
quis eadem natura manet, quae semina rerum
conicere in loca quaeque queat simili ratione
atque huc sunt coniecta, necesse est confiteare
1075 esse alios aliis terrarum in partibus orbis
et varias hominum gentis et saecula ferarum.

[1032] if all these things were now for the first time, if I say they were now suddenly presented to mortals beyond all expectation, what could have been named that would be more marvelous than these things, or that nations beforehand would less venture to believe could be?

Nothing, methinks: so wondrous strange had been this sight.

Yet how little, you know, wearied as all are to satiety with seeing, any one now cares to look up into heaven's glittering quarters! Cease therefore to be dismayed by the mere novelty and so to reject reason from your mind with

loathing: weigh the questions rather with keen judgment and if they seem to you to be true, surrender, or if they are a falsehood, gird yourself to the encounter.

For since the sum of space is unlimited outside beyond these walls of the world, the mind seeks to apprehend what there is yonder there, to which the spirit ever yearns to look forward, and to which the mind's emission reaches in free and unembarrassed flight.

In the first place we see that round in all directions, about above and underneath, throughout the universe there is no bound, as I have shown and as the thing of itself proclaims with loud voice and as clearly shines out in the nature of bottomless space.

In no wise then can it be deemed probable, when space yawns illimitable towards all points and seeds in number numberless and sum unfathomable fly about in manifold ways driven on in ceaseless motion, that this single earth and heaven have been brought into being, that those bodies of matter so many in number do nothing outside them; the more so that this world has been made by nature, just as the seeds of things have chanced spontaneously to clash, after being brought together in manifold wise without purpose, without foresight, without result, and at last have filtered through such seeds as, suddenly thrown together, were fitted to become on each occasion the rudiments of great things, of earth sea and heaven and the race of living things.

Wherefore again and again I say you must admit that there are elsewhere other combinations of matter like to this with ether holds in its greedy grasp.

Again when much matter is at hand, when room is there and there is no thing, no cause to hinder, things sure enough must go on and be completed.

Well, then, if on the one hand there is so great a store of seeds as the whole life of living creatures cannot reckon up, and if the same force and nature abide in them and have the power to throw the seeds of things together into their several places in the same way as they are thrown together into our world, you must admit that in other parts of space there -are other earths and various races of men and kinds of wild beasts.

Huc accedit ut in summa res nulla sit una,
unica quae gignatur et unica solaque crescat,
quin aliquoties siet saeculi permultaque eodem
1080 sint genere. in primis animalibus indice mente
invenies sic montivagum genus esse ferarum,
sic hominum geminam prolem, sic denique mutas
squamigerum pecudes et corpora cuncta volantum.
qua propter caelum simili ratione fatendumst
1085 terramque et solem, lunam mare cetera quae sunt,
non esse unica, sed numero magis innumerali;
quando quidem vitae depactus terminus alte

tam manet haec et tam nativo corpore constant
quam genus omne, quod his generatimst rebus abundans.

1090 Quae bene cognita si teneas, natura videtur
libera continuo, dominis privata superbis,
ipsa sua per se sponte omnia dis agere experts.
nam pro sancta deum tranquilla pectora pace
quae placidum degunt aevom vitamque serenam,
1095 quis regere immensi summam, quis habere profundi
indu manu validas potis est moderanter habenas,
quis pariter caelos omnis convertere et omnis
ignibus aetheriis terras suffire feracis,
omnibus inve locis esse omni tempore praesto,
1100 nubibus ut tenebras faciat caelique serena
concutiat sonitu, tum fulmina mittat et aedis
saepe suas disturbet et in deserta recedens
saeviat exercens telum, quod saepe nocentes
praeterit exanimatque indignos inque merentes?
1105 Multaque post mundi tempus genitale diemque
primigenum maris et terrae solisque coortum
addita corpora sunt extrinsecus, addita circum
semina, quae magnum iaculando contulit omne,
unde mare et terrae possent augescere et unde
1110 appareret spatium caeli domus altaque tecta
tolleret a terris procul et consurgeret aer.

[1077] Moreover in the sum of all there is no one thing which is begotten single in its kind and grows up single and sole of its kind; but a thing always belongs to some class and there are many other things in the same kind.

First, in the case of living things, most noble Memmius, you will find that in this sort has been begotten the mountain-ranging race of wild beasts, in this sort the breed of men, in this sort too the mute shoals of scaly creatures and all bodies of fowls.

Therefore on a like principle you must admit that earth, and sun, moon, sea, and all things else that are, are not single in their kind, but rather in number past numbering; since the deep-set boundary-mark of life just as much awaits these and they are just as much of a body that had birth, as any class of things which here on earth abounds in samples of its kind.

If you well apprehend and keep in mind these things, nature free at once and rid of her haughty lords is seen to do all things spontaneously of herself without the meddling of the gods.

For I appeal to the holy breasts of the gods who in tranquil peace pass a calm time and an unruffled existence, who can rule the sum, who can hold in his hand with controlling force the strong reins, of the immeasurable deep?

Who can at once make all the different heavens to roll and warm with

ethereal fires all the fruitful earths, or be present in all places at all times, to bring darkness with clouds and shake with noise the heaven's serene expanse, to hurl lightnings and often throw down his own temples, and withdrawing into the deserts there to spend his rage in practicing his bolt which often passes the guilty by and strikes dead the innocent and unoffending?

And since the birth-time of the world and first day of being to sea and earth and the formation of the sun many bodies have been added from without, many seeds added all round, which the great universe in tossing to and fro has contributed; that from them the sea and lands might increase and from them heaven's mansion might enlarge its expanse and raise its high vaults far above earth, and that air might rise up around.

nam sua cuique, locis ex omnibus, omnia plagis
corpora distribuuntur et ad sua saecula recedunt,
umor ad umorem, terreno corpore terra
1115 crescit et ignem ignes procidunt aetherae aether,
doneque ad extremum crescendi perficitur finem
omnia perduxit rerum natura creatrix;
ut fit ubi nihilo iam plus est quod datur intra
vitalis venas quam quod fluit atque recedit.
1120 omnibus hic aetas debet consistere rebus,
hic natura suis refrenat viribus auctum.
nam quae cumque vides hilario grandescere adauctu
paulatimque gradus aetatis scandere adultae,
plura sibi adsumunt quam de se corpora mittunt,
1125 dum facile in venas cibus omnis inditur et dum
non ita sunt late dispessa, ut multa remittant
et plus dispendi faciant quam vescitur aetas.
nam certe fluere atque recedere corpora rebus
multa manus dandum est; sed plura accedere debent,
1130 donec alescendi summum tetigere cacumen.
inde minutatim vires et robur adultum
frangit et in partem peiorem liquitur aetas.
quippe etenim quanto est res amplior, augmine adempto,
et quo latior est, in cunctas undique partis
1135 plura modo dispargit et a se corpora mittit,
nec facile in venas cibus omnis diditur ei
nec satis est, pro quam largos exaestuat aestus,
unde queat tantum suboriri ac subpeditare.
iure igitur pereunt, cum rarefacta fluendo
1140 sunt et cum externis succumbunt omnia plagis,
quando quidem grandi cibus aevo denique deficit,
nec tuditantia rem cessant extrinsecus ullam
corpora conficere et plagis infesta domare.

Sic igitur magni quoque circum moenia mundi
1145 expugnata dabunt labem putrisque ruinas;
omnia debet enim cibus integrare novando
et fulcire cibus, cibus omnia sustentare,
ne quiquam, quoniam nec venae perpetiuntur
quod satis est, neque quantum opus est natura ministrat.
1150 Iamque adeo fracta est aetas effetaque tellus
vix animalia parva creat, quae cuncta creavit
saecla deditque ferarum ingentia corpora partu.

[1111] For all bodies from all quarters are assigned by blows each to its appropriate thing and all withdraw to their proper classes; moisture passes to moisture, from an earthy body earth increases and fires forge fires and ether ether, until nature parent of things with finishing hand has brought all things on to their utmost limit of growth.

And this comes to pass when that which is infused into the life-arteries is no more than that which ebbs from them and withdraws: at this point the life-growth in all things must stop, at this point nature by her powers checks further increase.

For whatever things you see grow in size with joyous increase and mount by successive steps to mature age, take to themselves more bodies than they discharge from themselves, while food is readily infused into all the arteries and the things are not so widely spread out as to throw off many particles and occasion more waste than their age can take in as nourishment.

For no doubt it must be conceded that many bodies ebb away and withdraw from things; but still more must join them, until they have touched the utmost point of growth.

Then piece by piece age breaks their powers and matured strength and wastes away on the side of decay.

For the larger a thing is and the wider, as soon as its growth is stopped, at once it sheds abroad and discharges from it more bodies in all directions round; and its food is not readily transmitted into all its arteries and is not enough, in proportion to the copious exhalations which the thing throws off, to enable a like amount to rise up and be supplied.

For food must keep all things entire by renewing them, food must uphold, food sustain all things: all in vain, since the arteries refuse to hold what is sufficient, and nature does not furnish the needful amount.

With good reason therefore all things perish, when they have been rarefied by the ebb of particles and succumb to blows without, since food sooner or later fails advanced age, and bodies never cease to destroy a thing by thumping it from without and to overpower it by aggressive blows.

In this way then the walls too of the great world around shall be stormed and fall to decay and crumbling ruin.

Yes and even now the age is enfeebled and the earth exhausted by bearing

scarce produces little living creatures, she who produced all races and gave birth to the huge bodies of wild beasts.

haud, ut opinor, enim mortalia saecula superne
aurea de caelo demisit funis in arva
1155 nec mare nec fluctus plangentis saxa crearunt,
sed genuit tellus eadem quae nunc alit ex se.
praeterea nitidas fruges vinetaque laeta
sponte sua primum mortalibus ipsa creavit,
ipsa dedit dulcis fetus et pabula laeta;
1160 quae nunc vix nostro grandescunt aucta labore,
conterimusque boves et viris agricolarum,
conficimus ferrum vix arvis suppeditati:
usque adeo parcunt fetus augentque laborem.
iamque caput quassans grandis suspirat arator
1165 crebrius, in cassum magnos cecidissem labores,
et cum tempora temporibus praesentia confert
praeteritis, laudat fortunas saepe parentis.
tristis item vetulae vitis sator atque vietae
temporis incusat momen saeculumque fatigat,
1170 et crepat, antiquum genus ut pietate repletum
perfacile angustis tolerarit finibus aevom,
cum minor esset agri multo modus ante viritim;
nec tenet omnia paulatim tabescere et ire
ad capulum spatio aetatis defessa vetusto.

[1153] For methinks no golden chain let down to earth from heaven above the races of mortal beings, nor did the sea and waves which lash the rocks produce them, but the same earth bare them which now feeds them out of herself.

Moreover she first spontaneously of herself produced for mortals goodly corn-crops and joyous vineyards; of herself gave sweet fruits and glad pastures; which now-a-days scarce attain any size when furthered by our labor: we exhaust the oxen and the strength of the husbandmen; we wear out our iron, scarcely fed after all by the tilled fields; so niggardly are they of their produce and after so much labor do they let it grow.

And now the aged plowman shakes his head and sighs again and again to think that the labors of his hands have come to nothing; and when he compares present times with times past, he often praises the fortunes of his sire and harps on the theme, how the men of old rich in piety comfortably supported life on a scanty plot of ground, since the allotment of land to each man was far less of yore than now.

The sorrowful planter too of the exhausted and shriveled vine impeaches the march of time and wearies heaven, and comprehends not that all things are gradually wasting away and passing to the grave, quite forspent by age and

length of days.

Liber Tertius — BOOK III.

E tenebris tantis tam clarum extollere lumen
qui primus potuisti inlustrans commoda vitae,
te sequor, o Graiae gentis decus, inque tuis nunc
ficta pedum pono pressis vestigia signis,
5 non ita certandi cupidus quam propter amorem
quod te imitari aveo; quid enim contendat hirundo
cycnis, aut quid nam tremulis facere artibus haedi
consimile in cursu possint et fortis equi vis?
tu, pater, es rerum inventor, tu patria nobis
10 suppeditas praecepta, tuisque ex, inclute, chartis,
floriferis ut apes in saltibus omnia libant,
omnia nos itidem depascimur aurea dicta,
aurea, perpetua semper dignissima vita.
nam simul ac ratio tua coepit vociferari
15 naturam rerum divina mente coorta
diffugiunt animi terrores, moenia mundi
discedunt. totum video per inane geri res.
apparet divum numen sedesque quietae,
quas neque concutiunt venti nec nubila nimbis
20 aspergunt neque nix acri concreta pruina
cana cadens violat semperque innubilus aether
integit et large diffuso lumine ridet:
omnia suppeditat porro natura neque ulla
res animi pacem delibat tempore in ullo.
25 at contra nusquam apparent Acherusia templa,
nec tellus obstat quin omnia dispiciantur,
sub pedibus quae cumque infra per inane geruntur.
his ibi me rebus quaedam divina voluptas
percipit atque horror, quod sic natura tua vi

[1] THEE, who first was able amid such thick darkness to raise on high so bright a beacon and shed a light on the true interests of life, thee I follow, glory of the Greek race, and plant now my footsteps firmly fixed in thy imprinted marks, not so much from a desire to rival thee as that from the love I bear thee I yearn to imitate thee; for why need the swallow contend with swans, or what likeness is there between the feats of racing performed by kids with tottering limbs and by the powerful strength of the horse? Thou, father, art discoverer of things, thou furnishest us with fatherly precepts, and like as bees sip of all things in the flowery lawns, we, o glorious being, in like manner feed from out thy pages upon all the golden maxims, golden I say, most worthy ever of endless life.

For soon as thy philosophy issuing from a godlike intellect has begun with loud voice to proclaim the nature of things, the terrors of the mind are dispelled, the walls of the world part asunder, I see things in operation throughout the whole void: the divinity of the gods is revealed and their tranquil abodes which neither winds do shake nor clouds drench with rains nor snow congealed by sharp frosts harms with hoary fall: an ever-cloudless ether overcanopies them, and they laugh with light shed largely round.

Nature too supplies all their wants and nothing ever impairs their peace of mind.

But on the other hand the Acherusian quarters are nowhere to be seen, though earth is no bar to all things being descried, which are in operation underneath our feet throughout the void.

At all this a kind of godlike delight mixed with shuddering awe comes over me to think that nature by thy power is laid thus visibly open, is thus unveiled on every side.

30 tam manifesta patens ex omni parte resecta est.
Et quoniam docui, cunctarum exordia rerum
qualia sint et quam variis distantia formis
sponte sua volitent aeterno percita motu,
quove modo possint res ex his quaeque creari,
35 hasce secundum res animi natura videtur
atque animae claranda meis iam versibus esse
et metus ille foras praeceps Acheruntis agendus,
funditus humanam qui vitam turbat ab imo
omnia suffundens mortis nigrore neque ullam
40 esse voluptatem liquidam puramque relinquit.
nam quod saepe homines morbos magis esse timendos
infamemque ferunt vitam quam Tartara leti
et se scire animi naturam sanguinis esse,
aut etiam venti, si fert ita forte voluntas,
45 nec prosum quicquam nostrae rationis egere,
hinc licet advertas animum magis omnia laudis
iactari causa quam quod res ipsa probetur.
extorres idem patria longeque fugati
conspectu ex hominum, foedati crimine turpi,
50 omnibus aerumnis adfecti denique vivunt,
et quo cumque tamen miseri venere parentant
et nigras mactant pecudes et manibus divis
inferias mittunt multoque in rebus acerbis
acrius advertunt animos ad religionem.
55 quo magis in dubiis hominem spectare periculis
convenit adversisque in rebus noscere qui sit;
nam verae voces tum demum pectore ab imo

eliciuntur et eripitur persona amanare.
denique avarities et honorum caeca cupido,
60 quae miseros homines cogunt transcendere fines
iuris et inter dum socios scelerum atque ministros
noctes atque dies niti praestante labore
ad summas emergere opes, haec vulnera vitae
non minimam partem mortis formidine aluntur.
65 turpis enim ferme contemptus et acris egestas
semota ab dulci vita stabilique videtur
et quasi iam leti portas cunctarier ante;
unde homines dum se falso terrore coacti
effugisse volunt longe longeque remosse,
70 sanguine civili rem conflant divitiasque
conduplicant avidi, caedem caede accumulantes,
crudeles gaudent in tristi funere fratris
et consanguineum mensas odere timentque.
consimili ratione ab eodem saepe timore

[30] And now since I have shown what-like the beginnings of all things are and how diverse with varied shapes as they fly spontaneously driven on in everlasting motion, and how all things can be severally produced out of these, next after these questions the nature of the mind and soul should methinks be cleared up by my verses and that dread of Acheron be driven headlong forth, troubling as it does the life of man from its inmost depths and over spreading all things with the blackness of death, allowing no pleasure to be pure and unalloyed.

For as to what men often give out that diseases and a life of shame are more to be feared than Tartarus' place of death, and that they know the soul to be of blood or it maybe of wind, if haply their choice so direct, and that they have no need at all of our philosophy, you may perceive for the following reasons that all these boasts are thrown out more for glory's sake than because the thing is really believed.

These very men, exiles from their country and banished far from the sight of men, live degraded by foul charge of guilt, sunk in a word in every kind of misery, and whithersoever the poor wretches are come, they yet do offer sacrifices to the dead and slaughter black sheep and make libations to the gods manes, and in times of distress turn their thoughts to religion much more earnestly.

Wherefore you can better test the man in doubts and dangers and mid adversity learn who he is; for then and not till then the words of truth are forced out from the bottom of his heart: the mask is torn off, the reality is left.

Avarice again and blind lust of honors which constrain unhappy men to overstep the bounds of right and sometimes as partners and agents of crimes to strive night and day with surpassing effort to struggle up to the summit of

power, these sores of life are in no small measure fostered by the dread of death.

For foul scorn and pinching want in every case are seen to be far removed from a life of pleasure and security and to be a loitering so to say before the gates of death.

And while men driven on by an unreal dread wish to escape far away from these and keep them far from them, they amass wealth by civil bloodshed and greedily double their riches piling up murder on murder; cruelly triumph in the sad death of a brother and hate and fear the tables of kinsfolk.

Often likewise from the same fear envy causes them to pine:

75 macerat invidia ante oculos illum esse potentem,
illum aspectari, claro qui incedit honore,
ipsi se in tenebris volvi caenoque queruntur.
intereunt partim statuarum et nominis ergo.
et saepe usque adeo, mortis formidine, vitae
80 percipit humanos odium lucisque videndae,
ut sibi consciscant maerenti pectore letum
obliti fontem curarum hunc esse timorem:
hunc vexare pudorem, hunc vincula amicitiai
rumpere et in summa pietate evertere suadet:
85 nam iam saepe homines patriam carosque parentis
prodiderunt vitare Acherusia templa petentes.
nam vel uti pueri trepidant atque omnia caecis
in tenebris metuunt, sic nos in luce timemus
inter dum, nihilo quae sunt metuenda magis quam
90 quae pueri in tenebris pavitant finguntque futura.
hunc igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque necessest
non radii solis neque lucida tela diei
discutiant, sed naturae species ratioque.
Primum animum dico, mentem quem saepe vocamus,
95 in quo consilium vitae regimenque locatum est,
esse hominis partem nihilo minus ac manus et pes
atque oculi partes animantis totius extant.

* * *

sensum animi certa non esse in parte locatum,
verum habitum quendam vitalem corporis esse,
100 harmoniam Grai quam dicunt, quod faciat nos
vivere cum sensu, nulla cum in parte siet mens;
ut bona saepe valetudo cum dicitur esse
corporis, et non est tamen haec pars ulla valentis,
sic animi sensum non certa parte reponunt;
105 magno opere in quo mi diversi errare videntur.

Saepe itaque, in promptu corpus quod cernitur, aegret,
cum tamen ex alia laetamur parte latenti;
et retro fit ubi contra sit saepe vicissim,
cum miser ex animo laetatur corpore toto;
110 non alio pacto quam si, pes cum dolet aegri,
in nullo caput interea sit forte dolore.
Praeterea molli cum somno dedita membra
effusumque iacet sine sensu corpus honustum,
est aliud tamen in nobis quod tempore in illo
115 multimodis agitur et omnis accipit in se
laetitiae motus et curas cordis inanis.

[75] they make moan that before their very eye she is powerful, he attracts attention, who walks arrayed in gorgeous dignity, while they are wallowing in darkness and dirt.

Some wear themselves to death for the sake of statues and a name.

And often to such a degree through dread of death does hate of life and of the sight of daylight seize upon mortals, that they commit self-murder with a sorrowing heart, quite forgetting that this fear is the source of their cares, [this fear which urges men to every sin] prompts this one to put all shame to route, another to burst asunder the bonds of friendship, and in fine to overturn duty from its very base; since often ere now men have betrayed country and dear parents in seeking to shun the Acherusian quarters.

For even as children are flurried and dread all things in the thick darkness, thus we in the daylight fear at times things not a whit more to be dreaded than what children shudder at in the dark and fancy sure to be.

This terror therefore and darkness of mind must be dispelled not by the rays of the sun and glittering shafts of day, but by the aspect and law of nature.

First then I say that the mind which we often call the understanding, in which dwells the directing and governing principle of life, is no less part of the man than hand and foot and eyes are parts of the whole living creature.

[Some however affirm] that the sense of the mind does not dwell in a distinct part, but is a certain vital state of the body, which the Greeks call *harmonia*, because by it, they say, we live with sense, though the understanding is in no one part; just as when good health is said to belong to the body, though yet it is not any one part of the man in health.

In this way they do not assign a distinct part to the sense of the mind; in all which they appear to me to be grievously at fault in more ways than one.

Often times the body which is visible to sight, is sick, while yet we have pleasure in another hidden part; and oftentimes the case is the very reverse, the man who is unhappy in mind feeling pleasure in his whole body; just as if, while a sick man's foot is pained, the head meanwhile should, be in no pain at all.

Moreover when the limbs are consigned to soft sleep and the burdened body lies diffused without sense, there is yet a something else in us which during that time is moved in many ways and admits into it all the motions of joy and unreal cares of the heart.

Nunc animam quoque ut in membris cognoscere possis
esse neque harmonia corpus sentire solere,
principio fit uti detracto corpore multo

120 saepe tamen nobis in membris vita moretur.

Atque eadem rursum, cum corpora pauca caloris
diffugere forasque per os est editus aër,
deserit extemplo venas atque ossa relinquit;
noscere ut hinc possis non aequas omnia partis
125 corpora habere neque ex aequo fulcire salutem,
sed magis haec, venti quae sunt calidique vaporis
semina, curare in membris ut vita moretur.

est igitur calor ac ventus vitalis in ipso
corpore, qui nobis moribundos deserit artus.

130 quapropter quoniam est animi natura reperta
atque animae quasi pars hominis, redde harmoniai
nomen, ad organicos alto delatum Heliconi,
sive aliunde ipsi porro traxere et in illam
transtulerunt, proprio quae tum res nomine egebat.

135 quidquid id est, habeant: tu cetera percipe dicta.
Nunc animum atque animam dico coniuncta teneri
inter se atque unam naturam conficere ex se,
sed caput esse quasi et dominari in corpore toto
consilium, quod nos animum mentemque vocamus.

140 idque situm media regione in pectoris haeret.
hic exultat enim pavor ac metus, haec loca circum
laetitiae mulcent: hic ergo mens animusquest.
cetera pars animae per totum dissita corpus
paret et ad numen mentis momenque movetur.

145 idque sibi solum per se sapit et sibi gaudet,
cum neque res animam neque corpus commovet una.
et quasi, cum caput aut oculus temptante dolore
laeditur in nobis, non omni concruciamur
corpore, sic animus nonnumquam laeditur ipse

150 laetitiaque viget, cum cetera pars animai
per membra atque artus nulla novitate cietur;
verum ubi vementi magis est commota metu mens,
consentire animam totam per membra videmus
sudoresque ita palloremque existere toto

155 corpore et infringi linguam vocemque aboriri,

caligare oculos, sonere auris, succidere artus,

[115] Now that you may know that the soul as well is in the limbs and that the body is not wont to have sense by any harmony, this is a main proof: when much of the body has been taken away, still life often stays in the limbs; and yet the same life, when a few bodies of heat have been dispersed abroad, and some air has been forced out through the mouth, abandons at once the veins and quits the bones: by this you may perceive that all bodies have not functions of like importance or alike uphold existence, but rather that those seeds which constitute wind and heat, cause life to stay in the limbs.

Therefore vital heat and wind are within the body and abandon our frame at death.

Since then the nature of the mind and that of the soul have been proved to be a part, as it were of the man, surrender the name of harmony, whether brought down to musicians from high Helicon, or whether rather they have themselves taken it from something else and transferred it to that thing which then was in need of a distinctive name; whatever it be, let them keep it: do you take in the rest of my precepts.

Now I assert that the mind and the soul are kept together in close union and make up a single nature, but that the directing principle which we call mind and understanding is the head, so to speak, and reigns paramount in the whole body.

It has a fixed seat in the middle region of the breast: here throb fear and apprehension, about these spots dwell soothing joys; therefore here is the understanding or mind.

All the rest of the soul disseminated through the whole body obeys and moves at the will and inclination of the mind.

It by itself alone knows for itself, rejoices for itself, at times when the impression does not move either soul or body together with it.

And as when some part of us, the head or the eye, suffers from an attack of pain, we do not feel the anguish at the same time over the whole body, thus the mind sometimes suffers pain by itself or is inspirited with joy, when all the rest of the soul throughout the limbs and frame is stirred by no novel sensation.

But when the mind is excited by some more vehement apprehension, we see the whole soul feel in unison through all the limbs, sweats and paleness spread over the whole body, the tongue falter, the voice die away, a mist cover the eyes, the ears ring, the limbs sink under one;

denique concidere ex animi terrore videmus
saepe homines; facile ut quivis hinc noscere possit
esse animam cum animo coniunctam, quae cum animi vi
160 percussa est, exim corpus propellit et icit.
Haec eadem ratio naturam animi atque animai
corpoream docet esse; ubi enim propellere membra,

corripere ex somno corpus mutareque vultum
 atque hominem totum regere ac versare videtur,
 165 quorum nil fieri sine tactu posse videmus
 nec tactum porro sine corpore, nonne fatendumst
 corporea natura animum constare animamque?
 praeterea pariter fungi cum corpore et una
 consentire animum nobis in corpore cernis.
 170 si minus offendit vitam vis horrida teli
 ossibus ac nervis disclusis intus adacta,
 at tamen insequitur languor terraeque petitus
 suavis et in terra mentis qui gignitur aestus
 inter dumque quasi exsurgendi incerta voluntas.
 175 ergo corpoream naturam animi esse necessest,
 corporeis quoniam telis ictuque laborat.
 Is tibi nunc animus quali sit corpore et unde
 constiterit pergam rationem reddere dictis.
 principio esse aio persuptilem atque minutis
 180 perquam corporibus factum constare. id ita esse
 hinc licet advertas animum, ut pernoscere possis.
 Nil adeo fieri celeri ratione videtur,
 quam si mens fieri proponit et inchoat ipsa;
 ocius ergo animus quam res se perciet ulla,
 185 ante oculos quorum in promptu natura videtur.
 at quod mobile tanto operest, constare rutundis
 perquam seminibus debet perquamque minutis,
 momine uti parvo possint impulsa moveri.
 namque movetur aqua et tantillo momine flutat,
 190 quippe volubilibus parvisque creata figuris.
 at contra mellis constantior est natura
 et pigri latices magis et cunctantior actus:
 haeret enim inter se magis omnis materiai
 copia, ni mirum quia non tam levibus extat
 195 corporibus neque tam suptilibus atque rutundis.
 namque papaveris aura potest suspensa levisque
 cogere ut ab summo tibi diffluat altus acervus,
 at contra lapidum coniectum spicarumque
 noenu potest. igitur parvissima corpora pro quam
 200 et levissima sunt, ita mobilitate fruuntur;

[157] in short we often see men drop down from terror of mind; so that anybody may easily perceive from this that the soul is closely united with the mind, and, when it has been smitten by the influence of the mind, forthwith pushes and strikes the body.

This same principle teaches that the nature of the mind and soul is bodily;

for when it is seen to push the limbs, rouse the body from sleep, and alter the countenance and guide and turn about the whole man, and when we see that none of these effects can take place without touch nor touch without body, must we not admit that the mind and the soul are of a bodily nature?

Again you perceive that our mind in our body suffers together with the body and feels in unison with it.

When a weapon with a shudder-causing force has been driven in and has laid bare bones and sinews within the body, if it does not take life, yet there ensues a faintness and a lazy sinking to the ground and on the ground the turmoil of mind which arises, and sometimes a kind of undecided inclination to get up.

Therefore the nature of the mind must be bodily, since it suffers from bodily weapons and blows.

I will now go on to explain in my verses of what kind of body the mind consists and out of what it is formed.

First of all I say that it is extremely fine and formed of exceedingly minute bodies.

That this is so you may, if you please to attend, clearly perceive from what follows: nothing that is seen takes place with a velocity equal to that of the mind when it starts some suggestion and actually sets it a-going; the mind therefore is stirred with greater rapidity than any of the things whose nature stands out visible to sight.

But that which is so passing nimble, must consist of seeds exceedingly round and exceedingly minute, in order to be stirred and set in motion by a small moving power.

Thus water is moved and heaves by ever so small a force, formed as it is of small particles apt to roll.

But on the other hand the nature of honey is more sticky, its liquid more sluggish and its movement more dilatory; for the whole mass of matter coheres more closely, because sure enough it is made of bodies not so smooth fine and round.

A breeze however gentle and light can force, as you may see, a high heap of poppy seed to be blown away from the top downwards; but on the other hand eurus itself cannot move a heap of stones.

at contra quae cumque magis cum pondere magno
asperaque inveniuntur, eo stabilita magis sunt.
nunc igitur quoniamst animi natura reperta
mobilis egregie, perquam constare necessest
205 corporibus parvis et levibus atque rutundis.
quae tibi cognita res in multis, o bone, rebus
utilis inveniatur et opportuna cluebit.
Haec quoque res etiam naturam dedicat eius,
quam tenui constet textura quamque loco se

210 contineat parvo, si possit conglomerari,
quod simul atque hominem leti secura quies est
indepta atque animi natura animaeque recessit,
nil ibi libatum de toto corpore cernas
ad speciem, nihil ad pondus: mors omnia praestat,
215 vitalem praeter sensum calidumque vaporem.
ergo animam totam perparvis esse necessest
seminibus nexam per venas viscera nervos,
qua tenus, omnis ubi e toto iam corpore cessit,
extima membrorum circumcaesura tamen se
220 incolumem praestat nec deficit ponderis hilum.
quod genus est, Bacchi cum flos evanuit aut cum
spiritus unguenti suavis diffugit in auras
aut aliquo cum iam sucus de corpore cessit;
nil oculis tamen esse minor res ipsa videtur
225 propterea neque detractum de pondere quicquam,
ni mirum quia multa minutaue semina sucos
efficiunt et odorem in toto corpore rerum.
quare etiam atque etiam mentis naturam animaeque
scire licet perquam pauxillis esse creatam
230 seminibus, quoniam fugiens nil ponderis aufert.
Nec tamen haec simplex nobis natura putanda est.
tenvis enim quaedam moribundos deserit aura
mixta vapore, vapor porro trahit aëra secum;
nec calor est quisquam, cui non sit mixtus et aër;
235 rara quod eius enim constat natura, necessest
aëris inter eum primordia multa moveri.
iam triplex animi est igitur natura reperta;
nec tamen haec sat sunt ad sensum cuncta creandum,
nil horum quoniam recipit mens posse creare
240 sensiferos motus, quae denique mente volutat.
quarta quoque his igitur quaedam natura necessest
adtribuatur; east omnino nominis expers;

[199] Therefore bodies possess a power of moving in proportion to their smallness and smoothness; and on the other hand the greater weight and roughness bodies prove to have, the more stable they are.

Since then the nature of the mind has been found to be eminently easy to move, it must consist of bodies exceedingly small smooth and round.

The knowledge of which fact, my good friend, will on many accounts prove useful and be serviceable to you.

The following fact too likewise demonstrates how fine the texture is of which its nature is composed, and how small the room is in which it can be contained, could it only be collected into one mass: soon as the untroubled

sleep of death has gotten hold of a man and the nature of the mind and soul has withdrawn, you can perceive then no diminution of the entire body either in appearance or weight: death makes all good save the vital sense and heat.

Therefore the whole soul must consist of very small seeds and be in woven through veins and flesh and sinews; inasmuch as after it has all withdrawn from the whole body, the exterior contour of the limbs preserves itself entire and not a tittle of the weight is lost.

Just in the same way when the flavor of whine is gone or when the delicious aroma of a perfume has been dispersed into the air or when the savor has left some body, yet the thing itself does not therefore look smaller to the eye, nor does aught seem to have been taken from the weight, because sure enough many minute seeds make up the saviors and the odor in the whole body of the several things.

Therefore, again and again I say, you are to know that the nature of the mind and the soul has been formed of exceedingly minute seeds, since at its departure it takes away none of the weight.

We are not however to suppose that this nature is single.

For a certain subtle spirit mixed with heat quits men at death, and then the heat draws air along with it; there being no heat which has not air too mixed with it: for since its nature is rare, many first beginnings of air must move about through it.

Thus the nature of the mind is proved to be threefold; and yet these things all together are not sufficient to produce sense; since the fact of the case does not admit that any of these can produce sense-giving motions and the thoughts which a man turns over in mind.

Thus some fourth nature too must be added to these: it is altogether without name;

qua neque mobilius quicquam neque tenvius extat
nec magis e parvis et levibus ex elementis;

²⁴⁵ sensiferos motus quae didit prima per artus.

prima cietur enim, parvis perfecta figuris,

inde calor motus et venti caeca potestas

accipit, inde aër, inde omnia mobilitantur:

concutitur sanguis, tum viscera persentiscunt

²⁵⁰ omnia, postremis datur ossibus atque medullis

sive voluptas est sive est contrarius ardor.

nec temere huc dolor usque potest penetrare neque acre

permanare malum, quin omnia perturbentur

usque adeo ut vitae desit locus atque animai

²⁵⁵ diffugiant partes per caulas corporis omnis.

sed plerumque fit in summo quasi corpore finis

motibus: hanc ob rem vitam retinere valemus.

Nunc ea quo pacto inter sese mixta quibusque

compta modis vigeant rationem reddere aventem
 260 abstrahit invitum patrii sermonis egestas;
 sed tamen, ut potero summatim attingere, tangam.
 inter enim cursant primordia principiorum
 motibus inter se, nihil ut secernier unum
 possit nec spatio fieri divisa potestas,
 265 sed quasi multae vis unius corporis extant.
 quod genus in quovis animantium viscere volgo
 est odor et quidam color et sapor, et tamen ex his
 omnibus est unum perfectum corporis augmen,
 sic calor atque aër et venti caeca potestas
 270 mixta creant unam naturam et mobilis illa
 vis, initum motus ab se quae dividit ollis,
 sensifer unde oritur primum per viscera motus.
 nam penitus prorsum latet haec natura subestque
 nec magis hac infra quicquam est in corpore nostro
 275 atque anima est animae proporro totius ipsa.
 quod genus in nostris membris et corpore toto
 mixta latens animi vis est animaeque potestas,
 corporibus quia de parvis paucisque creatast,
 sic tibi nominis haec expers vis, facta minutis
 280 corporibus, latet atque animae quasi totius ipsa
 proporrost anima et dominatur corpore toto.
 consimili ratione necessest ventus et aër
 et calor inter se vigeant commixta per artus
 atque aliis aliud subsit magis emineatque,
 285 ut quiddam fieri videatur ab omnibus unum,
 ni calor ac ventus seorsum seorsumque potestas
 aëris interemant sensum diductaque solvant.
 est etiam calor ille animo, quem sumit, in ira
 cum fervescit et ex oculis micat acrius ardor;

[243] than it nothing exists more nimble or more fine, or of smaller or smoother elements: it first transmits the sense-giving motions through the frame; for it is first stirred, made up as it is of small particles; next the heat and the unseen force of the spirit receive the motions, then the air; then all things are set in action, the blood is stirred, every part of the flesh is filled with sensation; last of all the feeling is transmitted to the bones and marrow, whether it be one of pleasure or an opposite excitement.

No pain however can lightly pierce thus far nor any sharp malady make its way in, without all things being so thoroughly disordered that no room is left for life and the parts of the soul fly abroad through all the pores of the body.

But commonly a stop is put to these motions on the surface as it were of the body: for this reason we are able to retain life.

Now though I would fain explain in what way these are mixed up together, by what means united, when they exert their powers, the poverty of my native speech deters me sorely against my will: yet will I touch upon them and in summary fashion to the best of my ability: the first-beginnings by their mutual motions are interlaced in such a way that, none of them can be separated by itself, nor can the function of any go on divided from the rest by any interval; but they are so to say the several powers of one body.

Even so in any flesh of living creature you please without exception there is smell and some color and a savor, and yet out of all these is made up one single bulk of body.

Thus the heat and the air and the unseen power of the spirit mixed together produce a single nature, together with that nimble force which transmits to them from itself the origin of motion; by which means sense-giving motion first takes its rise through the fleshly frame.

For this nature lurks secreted in its inmost depths, and nothing in our body is farther beneath all ken than it, and more than this it is the very soul of the whole soul.

Just in the same way as the power of the mind and the function of the soul are latent in our limbs and throughout our body, because they are each formed of small and few bodies: even so, you are to know, this nameless power made of minute bodies is concealed and is moreover the very soul so to say of the whole soul, and reigns supreme in the whole body.

On a like principle the spirit and air and heat must, as they exert their powers, be mixed up together through the frame, and one must ever be more out of view or more prominent than another, that a single substance may be seen to be formed from the union of all, lest the heat and spirit apart by themselves and the power of the air apart by itself should destroy sense and dissipate it by their disunion.

290 est et frigida multa, comes formidinis, aura,
quae ciet horrorem membris et concitat artus;
est etiam quoque pacati status aëris ille,
pectore tranquillo fit qui voltuque sereno.
sed calidi plus est illis quibus acria corda
295 iracundaque mens facile effervescit in ira,
quo genere in primis vis est violenta leonum,
pectora qui fremitu rumpunt plerumque gementes
nec capere irarum fluctus in pectore possunt.
at ventosa magis cervorum frigida mens est
300 et gelidas citius per viscera concitat auras,
quae tremulum faciunt membris existere motum.
at natura boum placido magis aëre vivit
nec nimis irai fax umquam subdita percit
fumida, suffundens caecae caliginis umbra,

305 nec gelidis torpet telis perfixa pavoris;
 interutrasque sitast cervos saevosque leones.
 sic hominum genus est: quamvis doctrina politos
 constituat pariter quosdam, tamen illa relinquit
 naturae cuiusque animi vestigia prima.
 310 nec radicitus evelli mala posse putandumst,
 quin proclivius hic iras decurrat ad acris,
 ille metu citius paulo temptetur, at ille
 tertius accipiat quaedam clementius aequo.
 inque aliis rebus multis differre necessest
 315 naturas hominum varias moresque sequacis;
 quorum ego nunc nequeo caecas exponere causas
 nec reperire figurarum tot nomina quot sunt
 principiis, unde haec oritur variantia rerum.
 illud in his rebus video firmare potesse,
 320 usque adeo naturarum vestigia linqui
 parvola, quae nequeat ratio depellere nobis,
 ut nihil inpediat dignam dis degere vitam.
 Haec igitur natura tenetur corpore ab omni
 ipsaque corporis est custos et causa salutis;
 325 nam communibus inter se radicibus haerent
 nec sine pernicie divelli posse videntur.

[289] Thus the mind possesses that heat which it displays when it boils up in anger and fire flashes from the keen eyes; there is too much cold spirit, comrade of fear, which spreads a shivering over the limbs and stirs the whole frame; yes and there is also that condition of still air which has place when the breast is calm and the looks cheerful.

But they have more of the hot whose keen heart and passionate mind lightly boil up in anger.

Foremost in this class comes the fierce violence of lions who often as they chafe break their hearts with their roaring and cannot contain within their breast the billows of their rage.

Then the chilly mind of stags is fuller of the spirit and more quickly rouses through all the flesh its icy currents which cause a shivering motion to pass over the limbs.

But the nature of oxen has its life rather from the still air, and never does the smoky torch of anger applied to it stimulate it too much, shedding over it the shadow of murky gloom, nor is it transfixed and stiffened by the icy shafts of fear: it lies between the other two, stags and cruel lions.

And thus it is with mankind: however much teaching renders some equally refined, it yet leaves behind those earliest traces of the nature of each mind; and we are not to suppose that evil habits can be so thoroughly plucked up by the roots, that one man shall not be more prone than another to keen anger, a

second shall not be somewhat more quickly assailed by fear, a third shall not take some things more meekly than is right.

In many other points there must be differences between the varied natures of men and the tempers which follow upon these; though at present I am unable to set forth the hidden causes of these or to find names enough for the different shapes which belong to the first-beginnings from which shapes arises this diversity of things.

What herein I think I may affirm is this: traces of the different natures left behind, which reason is unable to expel from us, are so exceedingly slight that there is nothing to hinder us from living a life worthy of gods.

Well this nature is contained by the whole body and is in turn the body's guardian and the cause of its existence; for the two adhere together with common roots and cannot, it is plain, be riven asunder without destruction.

quod genus e thuris glaebis evellere odorem
haud facile est, quin intereat natura quoque eius,
sic animi atque animae naturam corpore toto
330 extrahere haut facile est, quin omnia dissoluantur.
inplexis ita principiis ab origine prima
inter se fiunt consorti praedita vita,
nec sibi quaeque sine alterius vi posse videtur
corporis atque animi seorsum sentire potestas,
335 sed communibus inter eas conflatur utrimque
motibus accensus nobis per viscera sensus.
Praeterea corpus per se nec gignitur umquam
nec crescit neque post mortem durare videtur.
non enim, ut umor aquae dimittit saepe vaporem,
340 qui datus est, neque ea causa convellitur ipse,
sed manet incolumis, non, inquam, sic animai
discidium possunt artus perferre relictis,
sed penitus pereunt convulsi conque putrescunt.
ex ineunte aevo sic corporis atque animai
345 mutua vitalis discunt contagia motus,
maternis etiam membris alvoque reposta,
discidium ut nequeat fieri sine peste maloque;
ut videas, quoniam coniunctast causa salutis,
coniunctam quoque naturam consistere eorum.
350 Quod super est, siquis corpus sentire refutat
atque animam credit permixtam corpore toto
suscipere hunc motum quem sensum nominamus,
vel manifestas res contra verasque repugnat.
quid sit enim corpus sentire quis adferet umquam,
355 si non ipsa palam quod res dedit ac docuit nos?
'at dimissa anima corpus caret undique sensu.'

perdit enim quod non proprium fuit eius in aevo
multaque praeterea perdit quom expellitur aevo.
Dicere porro oculos nullam rem cernere posse,
360 sed per eos animum ut foribus spectare reclusis,
difficilest, contra cum sensus ducat eorum;
sensus enim trahit atque acies detrudit ad ipsas,
fulgida praesertim cum cernere saepe nequimus,
lumina luminibus quia nobis praepediuntur.
365 quod foribus non fit; neque enim, qua cernimus ipsi,
ostia suscipiunt ullum reclusa laborem.

[326] Even as it is not easy to pluck the perfume out of lumps of frankincense without quite destroying its nature as well; so it is not easy to withdraw from the whole body the nature of the mind and soul without dissolving all alike.

With first-beginnings so interlaced from their earliest birth are they formed and gifted with a life of joint partnership, and it is plain that the faculty of the body and of the mind cannot feel separately, each alone without the other's power, but sense is kindled throughout our flesh and blown into flame between the two by the joint motions on the part of both.

Moreover the body by itself is never either begotten or grows or, it is plain, continues to exist after death.

For not in the way that the liquid of water often loses the heat which has been given to it, yet is not for that reason itself riven in pieces, but remains unimpaired, – not in this way, I say, can the abandoned frame endure the separation of the soul, but riven in pieces it utterly perishes and rots away.

Thus the mutual connections of body and soul from the first moment of their existence learn the vital motions even while hid in the body and womb of the mother, so that no separation can take place without mischief and ruin.

Thus you may see that, since the cause of existence lies in their joint action, their nature too must be a joint nature.

Furthermore, if any one tries to disprove that the body feels and believes that the soul mixed through the whole body takes upon it this motion which we name sense, he combats even manifest and undoubted facts.

For who will ever bring forward any explanation of what the body's feeling is, except that which the plain fact of the case has itself given and taught to us?

But when the soul it is said has departed, the body throughout is without sense; yes, for it loses what was not its own peculiar property in life; ay and much else it loses, before that soul is driven out of it.

Again to say that the eyes can see no object, but that the soul discerns through them as through an open door, is far from easy, since their sense contradicts this; for this sense even draws it and forces it out to the pupil: nay, often we are unable to perceive shining things because our eyes are

embarrassed by the lights.

But this is not the case with doors; for because we ourselves see, the open doors do not therefore undergo any fatigue.

praeterea si pro foribus sunt lumina nostra,
iam magis exemptis oculis debere videtur
cernere res animus sublatis postibus ipsis.

370 Illud in his rebus nequaquam sumere possis,
Democriti quod sancta viri sententia ponit,
corporis atque animi primordia singula primis
adposita alternis, variare ac nectere membra.
nam cum multo sunt animae elementa minora
375 quam quibus e corpus nobis et viscera constant,
tum numero quoque concedunt et rara per artus
dissita sunt, dum taxat ut hoc promittere possis,
quantula prima queant nobis iniecta ciere
corpora sensiferos motus in corpore, tanta
380 intervalla tenere exordia prima animai.
nam neque pulveris inter dum sentimus adhaesum
corpore nec membris incussam sidere cretam,
nec nebulam noctu neque arani tenvia fila
obvia sentimus, quando obretimur euntes,
385 nec supra caput eiusdem cecidisse vietam
vestem nec plumas avium papposque volantis,
qui nimia levitate cadunt plerumque gravatim,
nec repentis itum cuiusvis cumque animantis
sentimus nec priva pedum vestigia quaeque,
390 corpore quae in nostro culices et cetera ponunt.
usque adeo prius est in nobis multa ciendum
quam primordia sentiscant concussa animai,
semina corporibus nostris inmixta per artus,
et quam in his intervallis tuditantia possint
395 concursare coire et dissultare vicissim.
Et magis est animus vitae claustra coëcens
et dominantior ad vitam quam vis animai.
nam sine mente animoque nequit residere per artus
temporis exiguam partem pars ulla animai,
400 sed comes insequitur facile et discedit in auras
et gelidos artus in leti frigore linquit.
at manet in vita cui mens animusque remansit,
quamvis est circum caesis lacer undique membris;
truncus adempta anima circum membrisque remota
405 vivit et aetherias vitalis suscipit auras;

are removed the mind ought it would seem to have more power of seeing things, after doors, jambs and all, have been taken out of the way.

And herein you must by no means adopt the opinion which the revered judgment of the worthy man Democritus lays down, that the first-beginnings of body and mind placed together in successive layers come in alternate order and so weave the tissue of our limbs.

For not only are the elements of the soul much smaller than those of which our body and flesh are formed, but they are also much fewer in number and are disseminated merely in scanty number through the frame, so that you can warrant no more than this: the first-beginnings of the soul keep spaces between them at least as great as are the smallest bodies which, if thrown upon it, are first able to excite in our body the sense-giving motions.

Thus at times we do not feel the adhesion of dust when it settles on our body, nor the impact of chalk when it rests on our limbs, nor do we feel a mist at night nor a spider's slender threads as they come against us, when we are caught in its meshes in moving along, nor the same insect's flimsy web when it has fallen on our head, nor the feathers of birds and down of plants as it flies about, which commonly from exceeding lightness does not lightly fall, nor do we feel the tread of every creeping creature whatsoever nor each particular foot-print which gnats and the like stamp on our body.

So very many first-beginnings must be stirred in us, before the seeds of the soul mixed up in our bodies feel that these have been disturbed, and by thumping with such spaces between can clash unite and in turn recoil.

The mind has more to do with holding the fastnesses of life and has more sovereign sway over it than the power of the soul.

For without the understanding and the mind no part of the soul can maintain itself in the frame the smallest fraction of time, but follows at once in the other's train and passes away into the air and leaves the cold limbs in the chill of death.

But he abides in life whose mind and understanding continue to stay with him: though the trunk is mangled with its limbs shorn all roundabout it, after the soul has been taken away on all sides and been severed from the limbs the trunk yet lives and inhales the ethereal airs of life.

si non omnimodis, at magna parte animai
privatus, tamen in vita cunctatur et haeret;
ut, lacerato oculo circum si pupula mansit
incolumis, stat cernundi vivata potestas,
410 dum modo ne totum corrumpas luminis orbem
et circum caedas aciem solamque relinquis;
id quoque enim sine pernicie non fiet eorum.
at si tantula pars oculi media illa peresa est,
occidit extemplo lumen tenebraeque secuntur,
415 incolumis quamvis alioqui splendidus orbis.

hoc anima atque animus vincti sunt foedere semper.

Nunc age, nativos animantibus et mortalis
esse animos animasque levis ut noscere possis,
conquisita diu dulcique reperta labore

420 digna tua pergam disponere carmina vita.
tu fac utrumque uno subiungas nomine eorum
atque animam verbi causa cum dicere pergam,
mortalem esse docens, animum quoque dicere credas,
qua tenus est unum inter se coniunctaque res est.

425 Principio quoniam tenuem constare minutis
corporibus docui multoque minoribus esse
principiis factam quam liquidus umor aquai
aut nebula aut fumus — nam longe mobilitate
praestat et a tenui causa magis icta movetur,
430 quippe ubi imaginibus fumi nebulaeque movetur;
quod genus in somnis sopiti ubi cernimus alte
exhalare vaporem altaria ferreque fumum;
nam procul haec dubio nobis simulacra gerunturÆ
nunc igitur quoniam quassatis undique vasis

435 diffluere umorem et laticem discedere cernis,
et nebula ac fumus quoniam discedit in auras,
crede animam quoque diffundi multoque perire
ocius et citius dissolvi in corpora prima,
cum semel ex hominis membris ablata recessit;
440 quippe etenim corpus, quod vas quasi constitit eius,
cum cohibere nequit conquassatum ex aliqua re
ac rarefactum detracto sanguine venis,
aëre qui credas posse hanc cohiberier ullo,
corpore qui nostro rarus magis incohibens sit?

445 Praeterea gigni pariter cum corpore et una
crescere sentimus pariterque senescere mentem.

[405] When robbed, if not of the whole, yet of a large portion of the soul, it still lingers in and cleaves to life just as, after the eye has been lacerated if the pupil has continued uninjured, the living power of sight remains, provided always you do not destroy the whole ball of the eye and pare close round the pupil and leave only it; for that will not be done even to the ball without the entire destruction of the eye.

But if that middle portion of the eye, small as it is, is eaten into, the sight is gone at once and darkness ensues, though a man have the bright ball quite unimpaired.

On such terms of union soul and mind are ever bound to each other.

Now mark me: that you may know that the minds and light souls of living creatures have birth and are mortal, I will go on to set forth verses worthy of

your attention, got together by long study and invented with welcome effort.

Do you mind to link to one name both of them alike, and when for instance I shall choose to speak of the soul, showing it to be mortal, believe that I speak of the mind as well, inasmuch as both make up one thing and are one united substance.

First of all then since I have shown the soul to be fine and to be formed of minute bodies and made up of much smaller first-beginnings than is the liquid of water or mist or smoke: for it far surpasses these in nimbleness and is moved, when struck by a far slenderer cause; inasmuch as it is moved by images of smoke and mist; as when for instance sunk in sleep we see altars steam forth their heat and send up their smoke on high; for beyond a doubt images are begotten for us from these things: well then since you see on the vessels being shattered the water flow away on all sides, and since mist and smoke pass away into air, believe that the soul too is shed abroad and perishes much more quickly and dissolves sooner into its first bodies, when once it has been taken out of the limbs of a man and has withdrawn.

For, when the body that serves for its vessel cannot hold it, if shattered from any cause and rarefied by the withdrawal of blood from the veins, how can you believe that this soul can be held by any air?

How can that air which is rarer than our body hold it in?

Again we perceive that the mind is begotten along with the body and grows up together with it and becomes old along with it.

nam vel ut infirmo pueri teneroque vagantur
corpore, sic animi sequitur sententia tenvis.
inde ubi robustis adolevit viribus aetas,
450 consilium quoque maius et auctior est animi vis.
post ubi iam validis quassatum est viribus aevi
corpus et obtusis ceciderunt viribus artus,
claudicat ingenium, delirat lingua labat mens,
omnia deficiunt atque uno tempore desunt.
455 ergo dissolui quoque convenit omnem animai
naturam, ceu fumus, in altas aëris auras;
quando quidem gigni pariter pariterque videmus
crescere et, ut docui, simul aevo fessa fatisci.
Huc accedit uti videamus, corpus ut ipsum
460 suscipere inmanis morbos durumque dolorem,
sic animum curas acris luctumque metumque;
quare participem leti quoque convenit esse.
quin etiam morbis in corporis avius errat
saepe animus; dementit enim deliraque fatur,
465 inter dumque gravi lethargo fertur in altum
aeternumque soporem oculis nutuque cadenti;
unde neque exaudit voces nec noscere voltus

illorum potis est, ad vitam qui revocantes
circum stant lacrimis rorantes ora genasque.
470 quare animum quoque dissolui fateare necessest,
quandoquidem penetrant in eum contagia morbi;
nam dolor ac morbus leti fabricator uterquest,
multorum exitio perdocti quod sumus ante.
et quoniam mentem sanari corpus ut aegrum
475 et pariter mentem sanari corpus inani
denique cor, hominem cum vini vis penetravit
acris et in venas discessit diditus ardor,
consequitur gravitas membrorum, praepediuntur
crura vacillanti, tardescit lingua, madet mens,
480 nant oculi, clamor singultus iurgia gliscunt,
et iam cetera de genere hoc quae cumque secuntur,
cur ea sunt, nisi quod vehemens violentia vini
conturbare animam consuevit corpore in ipso?
at quae cumque queunt conturbari inque pediri,
485 significant, paulo si durior insinuarit
causa, fore ut pereant aevo privata futuro.
Quin etiam subito vi morbi saepe coactus
ante oculos aliquis nostros, ut fulminis ictu,
concidit et spumas agit, ingemit et tremit artus,
490 desipit, extentat nervos, torquetur, anhelat
inconstanter, et in iactando membra fatigat,

[446] For even as children go about with a tottering and weakly body, so slender sagacity of mind follows along with it; then when their life has reached the maturity of confirmed strength, the judgment too is greater and the power of the mind more developed.

Afterwards when the body has been shattered by the mastering might of time and the frame has drooped with its forces dulled, then the intellect halts, the tongue dotes, the mind gives way, all faculties fail and are found wanting at the same time.

It naturally follows then that the whole nature of the soul is dissolved, like smoke, into the high air; since we see it is begotten along with the body and grows up along with it and, as I have shown, breaks down at the same time worn out with age.

Moreover we see that even as the body is liable to violent diseases and severe pain, so is the mind to sharp cares and grief and fear; it naturally follows therefore that it is its partner in death as well.

Again in diseases of the body the mind often wanders and goes astray; for it loses its reason and drives in its speech and often in a profound lethargy is carried into deep and never-ending sleep with drooping eyes and head; out of which it neither hears the voices nor can recognize the faces of those who

stand round calling it back to life and bedewing with tears face and cheeks.

Therefore you must admit that the mind too dissolves, since the infection of disease reaches to it; for pain and disease are both forgers of death: a truth we have fully learned ere now by the death of many.

Again, when the pungent strength of wine has entered into a man and its spirit has been infused into and transmitted through his veins, why is it that a heaviness of the limbs follows along with this, his legs are hampered as he reels about, his tongue falters, his mind is besotted, his eyes swim, shouting hiccupping, wranglings are rife, together with all the other usual concomitants, why is all this, if not because the overpowering violence of the wine is wont to disorder the soul within the body?

But whenever things can be disordered and hampered, they give token that if a somewhat more potent cause gained an entrance, they would perish and be robbed of all further existence.

Moreover it often happens that someone constrained by the violence of disease suddenly drops down before our eyes, as by a stroke of lightning, and foams at the mouth, moans and shivers through his frame, loses his reason, stiffens his muscles, is racked, gasps for breath fitfully, and wearies his limbs with tossing.

ni mirum quia vis morbi distracta per artus
turbat agens animam, spumans ut in aequore salso
ventorum validis fervescunt viribus undae.

495 exprimitur porro gemitus, quia membra dolore

adfiuntur et omnino quod semina vocis

eliciuntur et ore foras glomerata feruntur

qua quasi consuerunt et sunt munita viai.

desipientia fit, quia vis animi atque animai

500 conturbatur et, ut docui, divisa seorsum

disiectatur eodem illo distracta veneno.

inde ubi iam morbi reflexit causa, reditque

in latebras acer corrupti corporis umor,

tum quasi vaccillans primum consurgit et omnis

505 paulatim redit in sensus animamque receptat.

haec igitur tantis ubi morbis corpore in ipso

iactentur miserisque modis distracta laborent,

cur eadem credis sine corpore in aëre aperto

cum validis ventis aetatem degere posse?

510 Et quoniam mentem sanari corpus ut aegrum

cernimus et flecti medicina posse videmus,

id quoque praesagit mortalem vivere mentem.

addere enim partis aut ordine traiecere aecumst

aut aliquid prosum de summa detrahere hilum,

515 commutare animum qui cumque adoritur et infit

aut aliam quamvis naturam flectere quaerit.
at neque transferri sibi partis nec tribui vult
immortale quod est quicquam neque defluere hilum;
nam quod cumque suis mutatum finibus exit,
520 continuo hoc mors est illius quod fuit ante.
ergo animus sive aegrescit, mortalia signa
mittit, uti docui, seu flectitur a medicina.
usque adeo falsae rationi vera videtur
res occurrere et effugium praecludere eunti
525 ancipitique refutatu convincere falsum.
Denique saepe hominem paulatim cernimus ire
et membratim vitalem deperdere sensum;
in pedibus primum digitos livescere et unguis,

[492] Sure enough, because the violence of the disease spreads itself through his frame and disorders him, he foams as he tries to eject his soul, just as in the salt sea the waters boil with the mastering might of the winds.

A moan too is forced out, because the limbs are seized with pain, and mainly because seeds of voice are driven forth and are carried in a close mass out by the mouth, the road which they are accustomed to take and where they have a well-paved way.

Loss of reason follows, because the powers of the mind and soul are disordered and, as I have shown, are riven and forced asunder, torn to pieces by the same baneful malady.

Then after the cause of the disease has bent its course back and the acrid humors of the distempered body return to their hiding-places, then he first gets up like one reeling, and by little and little, comes back into full possession of his senses and regains his soul.

Since therefore even within the body mind and soul are harassed by such violent distempers and so miserably racked by sufferings, why believe that they without the body in the open air can continue existence battling with fierce winds?

And since we perceive that the mind is healed like the sick body, and we see that it can be altered by medicine, this too gives warning that the mind has a mortal existence.

For it is natural that whosoever essays and attempts to change the mind or seeks to alter any other nature you like, should add new parts or change the arrangement of the present, or withdraw in short some tittle from the sum.

But that which is immortal will not to have its parts transposed nor any addition to be made nor one tittle to ebb away; for whenever a thing changes and quits its proper limits, this change is at once the death of that which was before.

Therefore the mind, whether it is sick or whether it is altered by medicine alike, as I have shown, gives forth mortal symptoms.

So invariably is truth found to make head against false reason and to cut off all retreat from the assailant, and by a two-fold refutation to put falsehood to rout.

Again we often see a man pass gradually away and limb by limb lose vital sense; first the toes of his feet and the nails turn livid, then the feet and shanks die, then next the steps of chilly death creep with slow pace over the other members.

inde pedes et crura mori, post inde per artus
530 ire alios tractim gelidi vestigia leti.
scinditur atque animae haec quoniam natura nec uno
tempore sincera existit, mortalis habendast.
quod si forte putas ipsam se posse per artus
introsum trahere et partis conducere in unum
535 atque ideo cunctis sensum diducere membris,
at locus ille tamen, quo copia tanta animai
cogitur, in sensu debet maiore videri;
qui quoniam nusquamst, ni mirum, ut diximus ante,
dilaniata foras dispargitur, interit ergo.
540 quin etiam si iam libeat concedere falsum
et dare posse animam glomerari in corpore eorum,
lumina qui lincunt moribundi particulatim,
mortalem tamen esse animam fateare necesse
nec refert utrum pereat dispersa per auras
545 an contracta suis e partibus obbrutescat,
quando hominem totum magis ac magis undique sensus
deficit et vitae minus et minus undique restat.
Et quoniam mens est hominis pars una locoque
fixa manet certo, vel ut aures atque oculi sunt
550 atque alii sensus qui vitam cumque gubernant,
et vel uti manus atque oculus naresve seorsum
secreta ab nobis nequeunt sentire neque esse,
sed tamen in parvo lincuntur tempore tali,
sic animus per se non quit sine corpore et ipso
555 esse homine, illius quasi quod vas esse videtur,
sive aliud quid vis potius coniunctius ei
fingere, quandoquidem conexu corpus adhaeret.
Denique corporis atque animi vivata potestas
inter se coniuncta valent vitaque fruuntur;
560 nec sine corpore enim vitalis edere motus
sola potest animi per se natura nec autem
cassum anima corpus durare et sensibus uti.
scilicet avolsus radicibus ut nequit ullam
dispicere ipse oculus rem seorsum corpore toto,

565 sic anima atque animus per se nil posse videtur.
ni mirum quia per venas et viscera mixtim,
per nervos atque ossa tenentur corpore ab omni
nec magnis intervallis primordia possunt
libera dissultare, ideo conclusa moventur
570 sensiferos motus, quos extra corpus in auras
aëris haut possunt post mortem eiecta moveri
propterea quia non simili ratione tenentur;

[529] Therefore since the nature of the soul is rent and passes away and does not at one time stand forth in its entirety, it must be reckoned mortal.

But if haply you suppose that it can draw itself in through the whole frame and mass its parts together and in this way withdraw sense from all the limbs, yet then that spot into which so great a store of soul is gathered ought to show itself in possession of a greater amount of sense.

But as this is nowhere found, sure enough as we said before, it is torn in pieces and scattered abroad, and therefore dies.

Moreover if I were pleased for the moment to grant what is false and admit that the soul might be collected in one mass in the body of those who leave the light dying piecemeal, even then you must admit the soul to be mortal; and it makes no difference whether it perish dispersed in air, or gathered into one lump out of all its parts lose all feeling, since sense ever more and more fails the whole man throughout and less and less of life remains throughout.

And since the mind is one part of a man which remains fixed in a particular spot, just as are the ears and eyes and the other senses which guide and direct life; and just as the hand or eye or nose when separated from us cannot feel and exist apart, but in however short a time wastes away in putrefaction, thus the mind cannot exist by itself without the body and the man's self which as you see serves for the mind's vessel or any thing else you choose to imagine which implies a yet closer union with it, since the body is attached to it by the nearest ties.

Again the quickened powers of body and mind by their joint partnership enjoy health and life; for the nature of the mind cannot by itself alone without the body give forth vital motions nor can the body again bereft of the soul continue to exist and make use of its senses: just, you are to know, as the eye, itself torn away from its roots, cannot see anything when apart from the whole body, thus the soul and, mind cannot, it is plain, do anything by themselves.

Sure enough, because mixed up through veins and flesh, sinews and bones, their first-beginnings are confined by all the body and are not free to bound away leaving great spaces between, therefore thus shut in they make those sense-giving motions which they cannot make after death when forced out of the body into the air by reason that they are not then confined in a like manner;

corpus enim atque animans erit aër, si cohibere

sese anima atque in eos poterit concludere motus,
575 quos ante in nervis et in ipso corpore agebat.
quare etiam atque etiam resoluta corporis omni
tegmine et eiectis extra vitalibus auris
dissolui sensus animi fateare necessest
atque animam, quoniam coniunctast causa duobus.
580 Denique cum corpus nequeat perferre animai
discidium, quin in taetro tabescat odore,
quid dubitas quin ex imo penitusque coorta
emanarit uti fumus diffusa animae vis,
atque ideo tanta mutatum putre ruina
585 conciderit corpus, penitus quia mota loco sunt
fundamenta foras manant animaeque per artus
perque viarum omnis flexus, in corpore qui sunt,
atque foramina? multimodis ut noscere possis
dispertitam animae naturam exisse per artus
590 et prius esse sibi distractam corpore in ipso,
quam prolapsa foras enaret in aëris auras.
Quin etiam finis dum vitae vertitur intra,
saepe aliqua tamen e causa labefacta videtur
ire anima ac toto solui de corpore tota
595 et quasi supremo languescere tempore voltus
molliaque exsanguī cadere omnia corpore membra.
quod genus est, animo male factum cum perhibetur
aut animam liquisse; ubi iam trepidatur et omnes
extremum cupiunt vitae reprehendere vinclum;
600 conquassatur enim tum mens animaeque potestas
omnis. et haec ipso cum corpore conlabefiunt,
ut gravior paulo possit dissolvere causa.
Quid dubitas tandem quin extra prodita corpus
inbecilla foras in aperto, tegmine dempto,
605 non modo non omnem possit durare per aevom,
sed minimum quodvis nequeat consistere tempus?
nec sibi enim quisquam moriens sentire videtur
ire foras animam incolumem de corpore toto,
nec prius ad iugulum et supera succedere fauces,
610 verum deficere in certa regione locatam;

[572] for the air will be a body and a living thing if the soul shall be able to keep itself together and to enclose in it those motions which it used before to perform in the sinews and within the body.

Moreover, even while it yet moves within the confines of life, often the soul shaken from some cause or other is seen to wish to pass out and be loosed from the whole body, the features are seen to droop as at the last hour

and all the limbs to sink flaccid over the bloodless trunk: just as happens, when the phrase is used, the mind is in a bad way, or the soul is quite gone; when all is hurry and everyone is anxious to keep from parting the last tie of life; for then the mind and the power of the soul are shaken throughout and both are quite loosened together with the body; so that a cause somewhat more powerful can quite break them up.

Why doubt, I would ask, that the soul when driven forth out of the body, when in the open air, feeble as it is, stripped of its covering, not only cannot continue through eternity, but is unable to hold together the smallest fraction of time?

Therefore, again and again I say, when the enveloping body has been all broken up and the vital airs have been forced out, you must admit that the senses of the mind and the soul are dissolved, since the cause of destruction is one and inseparable for both body and soul.

Again since the body is unable to bear the separation of the soul without rotting away in a noisome stench, why doubt that the power of the soul gathering itself up from the inmost depths of body has oozed out and dispersed like smoke, and that the crumbling body has changed and tumbled in with so total a ruin for this reason because its foundations throughout are stirred from their places, the soul oozing out abroad through the frame, through all the winding passages which are in the body, and all openings?

So that in ways manifold you may learn that the nature of the soul has been divided piecemeal and gone forth throughout the frame, and that it has been tom to shreds within the body, ere it glided forth and swam out into the air.

For no one when dying appears to feel the soul go forth entire from his whole body or first mount up to the throat and gullet, but all feel it fail in that part which lies in a particular quarter;

ut sensus alios in parti quemque sua scit
dissolui. quod si immortalis nostra foret mens,
non tam se moriens dissolvi conquereretur,
sed magis ire foras vestemque relinquere, ut anguis.

⁶¹⁵ Denique cur animi numquam mens consiliumque
gignitur in capite aut pedibus manibusve, sed unis
sedibus et certis regionibus omnibus haeret,
si non certa loca ad nascendum reddita cuique
sunt, et ubi quicquid possit durare creatum

⁶²⁰ atque ita multimodis partitis artubus esse,
membrorum ut numquam existat praeposterus ordo?
usque adeo sequitur res rem, neque flamma creari
fluminibus solitast neque in igni gignier alior.

Praeterea si immortalis natura animaist

⁶²⁵ et sentire potest secreta a corpore nostro,
quinque, ut opinor, eam faciundum est sensibus auctam.

nec ratione alia nosmet proponere nobis
possumus infernas animas Acherunte vagare.
pictores itaque et scriptorum saecula priora
630 sic animas intro duxerunt sensibus auctas.
at neque sorsum oculi neque nares nec manus ipsa
esse potest animae neque sorsum lingua neque aures;
haud igitur per se possunt sentire neque esse.
Et quoniam toto sentimus corpore inesse
635 vitalem sensum et totum esse animale videmus,
si subito medium celeri praeciderit ictu
vis aliqua, ut sorsum partem secernat utramque,
dispertita procul dubio quoque vis animai
et discissa simul cum corpore dissicietur.
640 at quod scinditur et partis discedit in ullas,
scilicet aeternam sibi naturam abnuat esse.
falciferos memorant currus abscidere membra
saepe ita de subito permixta caede calentis,
ut tremere in terra videatur ab artubus id quod
645 decidit abscisum, cum mens tamen atque hominis vis
mobilitate mali non quit sentire dolorem;
et simul in pugnae studio quod dedita mens est,
corpore relicuo pugnam caedesque petessit,
nec tenet amissam laevam cum tegmine saepe
650 inter equos abstraxe rotas falcesque rapaces,
nec cecidissem alius dextram, cum scandit et instat.

[610] just as they know that the senses as well suffer dissolution each in its own place.

But if our mind were immortal, it would not when dying complain so much of its dissolution, as of passing abroad and quitting its vesture, like a snake.

Again, why are the mind's understanding and judgment never begotten in the head or feet or hands, but cling in all alike to one spot and fixed quarter, if it be not that particular places are assigned for the birth of everything, and [nature has determined] where each is to continue to exist after it is born?

[Our body then must follow the same law] and have such a manifold organization of parts, that no perverted arrangement of its members shall ever show itself.

So invariably effect follows cause, nor is flame wont to be born in rivers nor cold in fire.

Again, if the nature of the soul is immortal and can feel when separated from our body, methinks we must suppose it to be provided with five senses; and in no other way can we picture to ourselves souls below flitting about Acheron.

Painters therefore and former generations of writers have thus represented

souls provided with senses.

But neither eyes nor nose nor hand can exist for the soul apart from the body, nor can tongue, nor can ears perceive by the sense of hearing or exist for the soul by themselves apart from the body.

And since we perceive that vital sense is in the whole body and we see that it is all endowed with life, if on a sudden any force with swift blow shall have cut it in twain so as quite to dis sever the two halves, the power of the soul will without doubt at the same time be cleft and cut asunder and dashed in twain together with the body.

But that which is cut and divides into any parts, you are to know disclaims for itself an everlasting nature.

Stories are told how scythed chariots reeking with indiscriminate slaughter often lop off limbs so instantaneously that that which has fallen down lopped off from the frame is seen to quiver on the ground, while yet the mind and faculty of the man from the suddenness of the mischief cannot feel the pain; and because his mind once for all is wholly given to the business of fighting, with what remains of his body he mingles in the fray and carnage, and often perceives not that the wheels and devouring scythes have carried off among the horses' feet his left arm shield and all;

inde alius conatur adempto surgere crure,
cum digitos agit at propter moribundus humi pes.
et caput abscisum calido viventeque trunco
655 servat humi voltum vitalem oculosque patentis,
donec reliquias animai reddidit omnes.
quin etiam tibi si, lingua vibrante, minanti
serpentis cauda, procero corpore, utrumque
sit libitum in multas partis discidere ferro,
660 omnia iam sorsum cernes ancisa recenti
volnere tortari et terram conspargere tabo,
ipsam seque retro partem petere ore priorem,
volneris ardenti ut morsu premat icta dolore.
omnibus esse igitur totas dicemus in illis
665 particulis animas? at ea ratione sequetur
unam animantem animas habuisse in corpore multas.
ergo divisast ea quae fuit una simul cum
corpore; quapropter mortale utrumque putandumst,
in multas quoniam partis disciditur aequae.
670 Praeterea si immortalis natura animai
constat et in corpus nascentibus insinuatur,
cur super ante actam aetatem meminisse nequimus
nec vestigia gestarum rerum ulla tenemus?
nam si tanto operest animi mutata potestas,
675 omnis ut actarum exciderit retinentia rerum,

non, ut opinor, id ab leto iam longius errat;
qua propter fateare necessest quae fuit ante
interiisse, et quae nunc est nunc esse creatam.
Praeterea si iam perfecto corpore nobis
680 inferri solitast animi vivata potestas
tum cum gignimur et vitae cum limen inimus,
haud ita conveniebat uti cum corpore et una
cum membris videatur in ipso sanguine cresse,
sed vel ut in cavea per se sibi vivere solam
685 convenit, ut sensu corpus tamen affluat omne.
quare etiam atque etiam neque originis esse putandumst
expertis animas nec leti lege solutas;
nam neque tanto opere adnecti potuisse putandumst
corporibus nostris extrinsecus insinuat,as,
690 quod fieri totum contra manifesta docet res
Ænamque ita conexa est per venas viscera nervos
ossaque, uti dentes quoque sensu participantur;

[650] another sees not that his right arm has dropped from him, while he mounts and presses forward.

Another tries to get up after he has lost his leg, while the dying foot quivers with its toes on the ground close by.

The head too when cut off from the warm and living trunk retains on the ground the expression of life and open eyes, until it has yielded up all the remnants of soul.

To take another case, if, as a serpent's tongue is quivering, as its tail is darting out from its long body, you choose to chop with an axe into many pieces both [tail and body], you will see all the separate portions thus cut off writhing under the fresh wound and bespattering the earth with gore, the fore part with the mouth making for its own hinder part, to allay with burning bite the pain of the wound with which it has been smitten.

Shall we say then that there are entire souls in all those pieces? Why from that argument it will follow that one living creature had many souls in its body; and this being absurd, therefore the soul which was one has been divided together with the body; therefore each alike must be reckoned mortal, since each is alike chopped up into many pieces.

Again, if the nature of the soul is immortal and makes its way into our body at the time of birth, why are we unable to remember besides the time already gone, and why do we retain no traces of past actions? If the power of the mind has been so completely changed that all remembrance of past things is lost, that methinks differs not widely from death; therefore you must admit that the soul which was before has perished and that which now is has now been formed.

Again if the quickened power of the mind is wont to be put into us after

our body is fully formed, at the instant of our birth and our crossing the threshold of life, it ought agreeably to this to live not in such a way as to seem to have grown with the body and together with its members within the blood, but as in a den apart by and to itself: the very contrary to what undoubted fact teaches; for it is so closely united with the body throughout the veins, flesh, sinews, and bones, that the very teeth have a share of sense; as their aching proves and the sharp twinge of cold water and the crunching of a rough stone when it has got into them out of bread.

Wherefore, again and again I say, we must believe souls to be neither without a birth nor exempted from the law of death;

morbus ut indicat et gelidai stringor aquai
et lapis oppressus subitis e frugibus asperÆ
695 nec, tam contextae cum sint, exire videntur
incolumes posse et salvas exsolvere sese
omnibus e nervis atque ossibus articulisque,
quod si forte putas extrinsecus insinuatam
permanere animam nobis per membra solere,
700 tanto quique magis cum corpore fusa peribit;
quod permanat enim, dissolvitur, interit ergo;
disperitur enim per caulas corporis omnis.
ut cibus, in membra atque artus cum diditur omnis,
disperit atque aliam naturam sufficit ex se,
705 sic anima atque animus quamvis est integra recens in
corpus eunt, tamen in manando dissoluuntur,
dum quasi per caulas omnis diduntur in artus
particulae quibus haec animi natura creatur,
quae nunc in nostro dominatur corpore nata
710 ex illa quae tunc periit partita per artus.
quapropter neque natali privata videtur
esse die natura animae nec funeris experts.
Semina praeterea linquuntur necne animai
corpore in exanimo? quod si lincuntur et insunt,
715 haut erit ut merito immortalis possit haberi,
partibus amissis quoniam libata recessit.
sin ita sinceris membris ablata profugit,
ut nullas partis in corpore liquerit ex se,
unde cadavera racenti iam viscere vermes
720 expirant atque unde animantum copia tanta
exos et exanguis tumidos perfluctuat artus?
quod si forte animas extrinsecus insinuari?
vermibus et privas in corpora posse venire
credis nec reputas cur milia multa animarum
725 conveniant unde una recesserit, hoc tamen est ut

quaerendum videatur et in discrimen agendum,
utrum tandem animae venentur semina quaeque
vermiculorum ipsaeque sibi fabricentur ubi sint,
an quasi corporibus perfectis insinuentur.
730 at neque cur faciant ipsae quareve laborent
dicere suppeditat. neque enim, sine corpore cum sunt,
sollicitae volitant morbis alguque fameque;

[692] for we must not believe that they could have been so completely united with our bodies, if they found their way into them from without, nor since they are so closely interwoven with them, does it appear that they can get out unharmed and unloose themselves unscathed from all the sinews and bones and joints.

But if haply you believe that the soul finds its way in from without and is wont to ooze through all our limbs, so much the more it will perish thus blended with the body; for what oozes through another is dissolved, and therefore dies.

As food distributed throughout the cavities of the body, while it is transmitted into the limbs and the whole frame, is destroyed and furnishes out of itself the matter of another nature, thus the soul and mind, though they pass entire into a fresh body, yet in oozing through it are dissolved, whilst there are transmitted, so to say, into the frame through all the cavities those particles of which this nature of mind is formed, which now is sovereign in our body, being born out of that soul which then perished when dispersed through the frame.

Wherefore the nature of the soul is seen to be neither without a birthday nor exempt from death.

Again, are seeds of the soul left in the dead body or not?

If they are left and remain in it, the soul cannot fairly be deemed immortal, since it has withdrawn lessened by the loss of some parts; but if when taken away from the yet untainted limbs it has fled so entirely away as to leave in the body no parts of itself, whence do carcasses exude worms from the now rank flesh and whence does such a swarm of living things, boneless and bloodless, surge through the heaving frame?

But if haply you believe that souls find their way into worms from without and can severally pass each into a body and you make no account of why many thousands of souls meet together in a place from which one has withdrawn, this question at least must, it seems, be raised and brought to a decisive test, whether souls hunt out the several seeds of worms and build for themselves a place to dwell in, or find their way into bodies fully formed so to say.

But why they should on their part make a body or take such trouble, cannot be explained; since being without a body they are not plagued as they flit about with diseases and cold and hunger, the body being more akin to, more

troubled by such infirmities, and by its contact with it the mind suffering many ills.

corpus enim magis his vitiis adfines laborat,
et mala multa animus contage fungitur eius.

735 sed tamen his esto quamvis facere utile corpus,
cum subeant; at qua possint via nulla videtur.
haut igitur faciunt animae sibi corpora et artus.
nec tamen est ut qui cum perfectis insinuentur
corporibus; neque enim poterunt subtiliter esse

740 conexas neque consensu contagia fient.

Denique cur acris violentia triste leonum
seminium sequitur, volpes dolus, et fuga cervos?
a patribus datur et a patrius pavor incitat artus,
et iam cetera de genere hoc cur omnia membris

745 ex ineunte aevo generascunt ingenioque,
si non, certa suo quia semine seminioque
vis animi pariter crescit cum corpore quoque?
quod si immortalis foret et mutare soleret
corpora, permixtis animantes moribus essent,
750 effugeret canis Hyrcano de semine saepe
cornigeri incursum cervi tremeretque per auras
aëris accipiter fugiens veniente columba,
desiperent homines, saperent fera saecula ferarum.
illud enim falsa fertur ratione, quod aiunt

755 immortalem animam mutato corpore flecti;
quod mutatur enim, dissolvitur, interit ergo;
traiciuntur enim partes atque ordine migrant;
quare dissolui quoque debent posse per artus,
denique ut intereant una cum corpore cunctae.

760 sin animas hominum dicent in corpora semper
ire humana, tamen quaeram cur e sapienti
stulta queat fieri, nec prudens sit puer ullus,
si non, certa suo quia semine seminioque
nec tam doctus equae pullus quam fortis equi vis.

765 scilicet in tenero tenerascere corpore mentem
confugient. quod si iam fit, fateare necessest
mortalem esse animam, quoniam mutata per artus
tanto opere amittit vitam sensumque priorem.

quoque modo poterit pariter cum corpore quoque

770 confirmata cupitum aetatis tangere florem
vis animi, nisi erit consors in origine prima?
quidve foras sibi vult membris exire senectis?
an metuit conclusa manere in corpore putri

et domus aetatis spatio ne fessa vetusto
775 obruat? at non sunt immortalī ulla pericla.

[734] Nevertheless be it ever so expedient for them to make a body, when they are going to enter, yet clearly there is no way by which they can do so.

Therefore souls do not make for themselves bodies and limbs; no: nor can they by any method find their way into bodies after they are full formed; for they will neither be able to unite themselves with a nice precision nor will any connection of mutual sensation be formed between them.

Again, why does untamed fierceness go along with the sullen brood of lions, cunning with foxes and proneness to flight with stags?

And to take any other instance of the kind, why are all qualities engendered in the limbs and temper from the very commencement of life, if not because a fixed power of mind derived from its proper seed and breed grows up together with the whole body? If it were immortal and wont to pass into different bodies, living creatures would be of interchangeable dispositions; a dog of Hyrcanian breed would often fly before the attack of an antlered stag, a hawk would cower in mid air as it fled at the approach of a dove, men would be without reason, the savage races of wild beasts would have reason.

For the assertion that an immortal soul is altered by a change of body is advanced on a false principle.

What is changed is dissolved, and therefore dies: the parts are transposed and quit their former order; therefore they must admit of being dissolved too throughout the frame, in order at last to die one and all together with the body.

But if they shall say that souls of men always go into human bodies, I yet will ask how it is a soul can change from wise to foolish, and no child has discretion, and why the mare's foal is not so well trained as the powerful strength of the horse.

You may be sure they will fly to the subterfuge that the mind grows weakly in a weakly body.

But granting this is so, you must admit the soul to be mortal, since changed so completely throughout the frame it loses its former life and sense.

Then too in what way will it be able to grow in strength uniformly with its allotted body and reach the coveted flower of age, unless it shall be its partner at its first beginning?

Or what means it by passing out from the limbs when decayed with age?

Does it fear to remain shut up in a crumbling body, fear that its tenement, worn out by protracted length of days, bury it in its ruins?

Denique conubia ad Veneris partusque ferarum
esse animas praesto deridiculum esse videtur,
expectare immortalis mortalia membra
innumero numero certareque praeproperanter
780 inter se quae prima potissimaque insinuetur;
si non forte ita sunt animarum foedera pacta,

ut quae prima volans advenerit insinuetur
prima neque inter se contendant viribus hilum.
Denique in aethere non arbor, non aequare in alto
785 nubes esse queunt nec pisces vivere in arvis
nec cruor in lignis neque saxis sucus inesse.
certum ac dispositumst ubi quicquid crescat et insit.
sic animi natura nequit sine corpore oriri
sola neque a nervis et sanguine longius esse.
790 quod si posset enim, multo prius ipsa animi vis
in capite aut umeris aut imis calcibus esse
posset et innasci quavis in parte soleret,
tandem in eodem homine atque in eodem vase manere.
quod quoniam nostro quoque constat corpore certum
795 dispositumque videtur ubi esse et crescere possit
sorsum anima atque animus, tanto magis infitandum
totum posse extra corpus durare genique.
quare, corpus ubi interiit, periisse necessest
confitere animam distractam in corpore toto.
800 quippe etenim mortale aeterno iungere et una
consentire putare et fungi mutua posse
desiperest; quid enim diversius esse putandumst
aut magis inter se disiunctum discrepitansque,
quam mortale quod est immortalis atque perenni
805 iunctum in concilio saevas tolerare procellas?
praeterea quaecumque manent aeterna necessest
aut quia sunt solido cum corpore respuere ictus
nec penetrare pati sibi quicquam quod queat artas
dissociare intus partis, ut materiai
810 corpora sunt, quorum naturam ostendimus ante,
aut ideo durare aetatem posse per omnem,
plagarum quia sunt expertia sicut inanest,
quod manet intactum neque ab ictu fungitur hilum,
aut etiam quia nulla loci sit copia circum,
815 quo quasi res possint discedere dissoluique,
sicut summarum summast aeterna, neque extra
quis locus est quo diffugiant neque corpora sunt quae
possint incidere et valida dissolvere plaga.
Quod si forte ideo magis immortalis habendast,
820 quod vitalibus ab rebus munita tenetur,
aut quia non veniunt omnino aliena salutis,
aut quia quae veniunt aliqua ratione recedunt
pulsa prius quam quid noceant sentire queamus,

praeter enim quam quod morbis cum corporis aegret,
825 advenit id quod eam de rebus saepe futuris
macerat inque metu male habet curisque fatigat,
praeteritisque male admissis peccata remordent.

[775] Why, an immortal being incurs no risks.

Again for souls to stand by at the unions of Venus and the birth-throes of beasts seems to be passing absurd, for them the immortals to wait for mortal limbs in number numberless and struggle with one another in forward rivalry, which shall first and by preference have entrance in; unless haply bargains are struck among the souls on these terms, that whichever in its flight shall first come up, shall first have right of entry, and that they shall make no trial at all of each other's strength.

Again a tree cannot exist in the ether, nor clouds in the deep sea nor can fishes live in the fields nor blood exist in woods nor sap in stones.

Where each thing can grow and abide is fixed and ordained.

Thus the nature of the mind cannot come into being alone without the body nor exist far away from the sinews and blood.

But if (for this would be much more likely to happen than that) the force itself of the mind might be in the head or shoulders or heels or might be born in any other part of the body, it would after all be wont to abide in one and the same man or vessel.

But since in our body even it is fixed and seen to be ordained where the soul and the mind can severally be and grow, it must still more strenuously be denied that it can abide and be born out of the body altogether.

Therefore when the body has died, we must admit that the soul has perished, wrenched away throughout the body.

To link forsooth a mortal thing with an everlasting and suppose that they can have sense in common and can be reciprocally acted upon, is sheer folly; for what can be conceived more incongruous, more discordant and inconsistent with itself, than a thing which is mortal, linked with an immortal and everlasting thing, trying in such union to weather furious storms?

But if haply the soul is to be accounted immortal for this reason rather, because it is kept sheltered from death-bringing things, either because things hostile to its existence do not approach at all, or because those which do approach, in some way or other retreat discomfited before we can feel the harm they do, [manifest experience proves that this can not be true].

For besides that it sickens in sympathy with the maladies of the body, it is often attacked by that which frets it on the score of the future and keeps it on the rack of suspense and wears it out with cares;

adde furem animi proprium atque oblivia rerum,
adde quod in nigras lethargi mergitur undas.

830 Nil igitur mors est ad nos neque pertinet hilum,
quandoquidem natura animi mortalis habetur.

et vel ut ante acto nihil tempore sensimus aegri,
 ad confligendum venientibus undique Poenis,
 omnia cum belli trepido concussa tumultu
 835 horrida contremuere sub altis aetheris auris,
 in dubioque fuere utrorum ad regna cadendum
 omnibus humanis esset terraque marique,
 sic, ubi non erimus, cum corporis atque animai
 discidium fuerit, quibus e sumus uniter apti,
 840 scilicet haud nobis quicquam, qui non erimus tum,
 accidere omnino poterit sensumque movere,
 non si terra mari miscebitur et mare caelo.
 et si iam nostro sentit de corpore postquam
 distractast animi natura animaeque potestas,
 845 nil tamen est ad nos, qui comptu coniugioque
 corporis atque animae consistimus uniter apti.
 nec, si materiem nostram collegerit aetas
 post obitum rursumque redegerit ut sita nunc est,
 atque iterum nobis fuerint data lumina vitae,
 850 pertineat quicquam tamen ad nos id quoque factum,
 interrupta semel cum sit repetentia nostri.
 et nunc nil ad nos de nobis attinet, ante
 qui fuimus, neque iam de illis nos adficit angor.
 nam cum respicias inmensi temporis omne
 855 praeteritum spatium, tum motus materiai
 multimodi quam sint, facile hoc adcredere possis,
 semina saepe in eodem, ut nunc sunt, ordine posta
 haec eadem, quibus e nunc nos sumus, ante fuisse.
 nec memori tamen id quimus reprehendere mente;
 860 inter enim iectast vitai pausa vageque
 deerrarunt passim motus ab sensibus omnes.
 debet enim, misere si forte aegreque futurumst;
 ipse quoque esse in eo tum tempore, cui male possit
 accidere. id quoniam mors eximit, esseque prohibet
 865 illum cui possint incommoda conciliari,
 scire licet nobis nihil esse in morte timendum
 nec miserum fieri qui non est posse, neque hilum
 differre an nullo fuerit iam tempore natus,
 mortalem vitam mors cum immortalis ademit.

[827] and when ill deeds are in the past, remorse for sins yet gnaws: then there is madness peculiar to the mind and forgetfulness of all things; then too it often sinks into the black waters of lethargy.

Death therefore to us is nothing, concerns us not a jot, since the nature of the mind is proved to be mortal; and as in time gone by we felt no distress

when the Poeni from all sides came together to do battle, and all things shaken by war's troublous uproar shuddered and quaked beneath high heaven, and mortal men were in doubt which of the two peoples it should be to whose empire all must fall by sea and land alike, thus when we shall be no more, when there shall have been a separation of body and soul, out of both of which we are each formed into a single being, to us, you may be sure, who then shall be no more, nothing whatever can happen to excite sensation, not if earth shall be mingled with sea and sea with heaven.

And even supposing the nature of the mind and power of the soul do feel, after they have been severed from our body, yet that is nothing to us who by the binding tie of marriage between body and soul are formed each into one single being.

And if time should gather up our matter after our death and put it once more into the position in which it now is, and the light of life be given to us again, this result even would concern us not at all, when the chain of our self-consciousness has once been snapped asunder.

So now we give ourselves no concern about any self which we have been before, nor do we feel any distress on the score of that self.

For when you look back on the whole past course of immeasurable time and think how manifold are the shapes which the motions of matter take, you may easily credit this too, that these very same seeds of which we now are formed, have often before been placed in the same order in which they now are; and yet we cannot recover this in memory: a break in our existence has been interposed, and all the motions have wandered to and fro far astray from the sensations they produced.

For he whom evil is to befall must in his own person exist at the very time it comes, if the misery and suffering are haply to have any place at all; but since death precludes this, and forbids him to be, upon whom the ills can be brought, you may be sure that we have nothing to fear after death, and that he who exists not, cannot become miserable, and that it matters not a whit whether he has been born into life at any other time, when immortal death has taken away his mortal life.

870 Proinde ubi se videas hominem indignarier ipsum,
post mortem fore ut aut putescat corpore posto
aut flammis interfiat malisve ferarum,
scire licet non sincerum sonere atque subesse
caecum aliquem cordi stimulum, quamvis neget ipse
875 credere se quemquam sibi sensum in morte futurum;
non, ut opinor, enim dat quod promittit et unde
nec radicitus e vita se tollit et eicit,
sed facit esse sui quiddam super inscius ipse.
vivid enim sibi cum proponit quisque futurum,
880 corpus uti volucres lacerent in morte feraeque,

ipse sui miseret; neque enim se dividit illum
nec removel satis a proiecto corpore et illum
se fingit sensuque suo contaminat astans.
hinc indignatur se mortalem esse creatum
885 nec videt in vera nullum fore morte alium se,
qui possit vivus sibi se lugere peremptum
stansque iacentem se lacerari urive dolere.
nam si in morte malumst malis morsuque ferarum
tractari, non invenio qui non sit acerbum
890 ignibus inpositum calidis torrescere flammis
aut in melle situm suffocari atque rigere
frigore, cum summo gelidi cubat aequore saxi,
urgerive superne obrutum pondere terrae.
'Iam iam non domus accipiet te laeta neque uxor
895 optima, nec dulces occurrent oscula nati
praeripere et tacita pectus dulcedine tangent.
non poteris factis florentibus esse tuisque
praesidium. misero misere' aiunt 'omnia ademit
una dies infesta tibi tot praemia vitae.'
900 illud in his rebus non addunt 'nec tibi earum
iam desiderium rerum super insidet una.'
quod bene si videant animo dictisque sequantur,
dissoluant animi magno se angore metuque.

[870] Therefore when you see a man bemoaning his hard case, that after death he shall either rot with his body laid in the grave or be devoured by flames or the jaws of wild beasts, you may be sure that his ring betrays a flaw and that there lurks in his heart a secret goad, though he himself declare that he does not believe that any sense will remain to him after death.

He does not methinks really grant the conclusion which he professes to grant nor the principle on which he so professes, nor does he take and force himself root and branch out of life, but all unconsciously imagines something of self to survive.

For when any one in life suggests to himself that birds and beasts will rend his body after death, he makes moan for himself: he does not separate himself from that self, nor withdraw himself fully from the body so thrown out, and fancies himself that other self and stands by and impregnates it with his own sense.

Hence he makes much moan that he has been born mortal, and sees not that after real death there will be no other self to remain in life and lament to self that his own self has met death, and there to stand and grieve that his own self there lying is mangled or burnt.

For if it is an evil after death to be pulled about by the devouring jaws of wild beasts, I cannot see why it should not be a cruel pain to be laid on fires

and burn in hot flames, or to be placed in honey and stifled, or to stiffen with cold, stretched on the smooth surface of an icy slab of stone, or to be pressed down and crushed by a load of earth above.

“Now no more shall thy house admit thee with glad welcome, nor a most virtuous wife and sweet children run to be the first to snatch kisses and touch thy heart with a silent joy. No more may thou be prosperous in thy doings, a safeguard to thine own. One disastrous day has taken from thee luckless man luckless wise all the many prizes of life.”

This do men say, but add not thereto “and now no longer does any craving for these things beset thee withal.”

For if they could rightly perceive this in thought and follow up the thought in words, they would release themselves from great distress and apprehension of mind.

‘tu quidem ut es leto sopitus, sic eris aevi
905 quod super est cunctis privatus doloribus aegris;
at nos horrifico cinefactum te prope busto
insatiabiliter deflevimus, aeternumque
nulla dies nobis maerorem e pectore demet.’
illud ab hoc igitur quaerendum est, quid sit amari
910 tanto opere, ad somnum si res redit atque quietem,
cur quisquam aeterno possit tabescere luctu.
Hoc etiam faciunt ubi discubere tenentque
pocula saepe homines et inumbrant ora coronis,
ex animo ut dicant: ‘brevis hic est fructus homullis;
915 iam fuerit neque post umquam revocare licebit.’
tam quam in morte mali cum primis hoc sit eorum,
quod sitis exurat miseros atque arida torrat,
aut aliae cuius desiderium insideat rei.
nec sibi enim quisquam tum se vitamque requireret,
920 cum pariter mens et corpus sopita quiescunt;
nam licet aeternum per nos sic esse soporem,
nec desiderium nostri nos adficit ullum,
et tamen haud quaquam nostros tunc illa per artus
longe ab sensiferis primordia motibus errant,
925 cum correptus homo ex somno se colligit ipse.
multo igitur mortem minus ad nos esse putandumst,
si minus esse potest quam quod nihil esse videmus;
maior enim turbae disiectus materiai
consequitur leto nec quisquam expergitus extat,
930 frigida quem semel est vitae pausa secuta.
Denique si vocem rerum natura repente.
mittat et hoc alicui nostrum sic increpet ipsa:
‘quid tibi tanto operest, mortalis, quod nimis aegris

luctibus indulges? quid mortem congemis ac fles?

935 nam si grata fuit tibi vita ante acta priorque
et non omnia pertusum congesta quasi in vas
commoda perfluxere atque ingrata interiire;
cur non ut plenus vitae conviva recedis
aequo animoque capis securam, stulte, quietem?

940 sin ea quae fructus cumque es periire profusa
vitaque in offensost, cur amplius addere quaeris,
rursum quod pereat male et ingratum occidat omne,
non potius vitae finem facis atque laboris?

[904] “Thou, even as now thou art, sunk in the sleep of death, shalt continue so to be all time to come, freed from all distressful pains; but we with a sorrow that would not be sated wept for thee, when close by thou didst turn to an ashen hue on thy appalling funeral pile, and no length of days shall pluck from our hearts our ever-during grief?”

This question therefore should be asked of this speaker, what there is in it so passing bitter, if it come in the end to sleep and rest, that any one should pine in never-ending sorrow.

This too men often, when they have reclined at table, cup in hand and shade their brows with crowns, love to say from the heart, “Short is this enjoyment for poor weak men; presently it will have been and never after may it be called back!”

As if after their death it is to be one of their chiefest afflictions that thirst and parching drought is to burn them up, hapless wretches, or a craving for any thing else is to beset them.

What folly! No one feels the want of himself and life at the time when mind and body are together sunk in sleep; for all we care this sleep might be everlasting, no craving whatever for ourselves then moves us.

And yet by no means do those first-beginnings throughout our frame wander at that time far away from their sense-producing motions, at the moment when a man starts up from sleep and collects himself.

Death therefore must be thought to concern us much less, if less there can be than what we see to be nothing; for a greater dispersion of the mass of matter follows after death, and no one wakes up, upon whom the chill cessation of life has once come.

Once more, if the nature of things could suddenly utter a voice and in person could rally any of us in such words as these:

“What hast thou: o mortal, so much at heart, that thou goest such lengths in sickly sorrows? Why bemoan and bewail death? For say thy life past and gone has been welcome to thee and thy blessings have not all, as if they were poured into a perforated vessel, run through and been lost without avail? Why not then take thy departure like a guest filled with life, and with resignation, thou fool, enter upon untroubled rest? But if all that thou hast enjoyed has

been squandered and lost, and life is a grievance, why seek to make any addition, to be wasted perversely in its turn and lost utterly without avail? Why not rather make an end of life and travail?

nam tibi praeterea quod machiner inveniamque,
945 quod placeat, nihil est; eadem sunt omnia semper.
si tibi non annis corpus iam marcet et artus
confecti languent, eadem tamen omnia restant,
omnia si perges vivendo vincere saecla,
atque etiam potius, si numquam sis moriturus',
950 quid respondemus, nisi iustam intendere litem
naturam et veram verbis exponere causam?
grandior hic vero si iam seniorque queratur
atque obitum lamentetur miser amplius aequo,
non merito inclamet magis et voce increpet acri:
955 'aufer abhinc lacrimas, baratre, et compesce querellas.
omnia perfunctus vitae praemia marces;
sed quia semper aves quod abest, praesentia temnis,
imperfecta tibi elapsast ingrataque vita,
et nec opinanti mors ad caput adstitit ante
960 quam satur ac plenus possis discedere rerum.
nunc aliena tua tamen aetate omnia mitte
aequo animoque, age dum, magnis concede necessis?'
iure, ut opinor, agat, iure increpet inciletque;
cedit enim rerum novitate extrusa vetustas
965 semper, et ex aliis aliud reparare necessest.
Nec quisquam in baratrum nec Tartara deditur atra;
materies opus est, ut crescant postera saecla;
quae tamen omnia te vita perfuncta sequuntur;
nec minus ergo ante haec quam tu cecidere cadentque.
970 sic alid ex alio numquam desistet oriri
vitaque mancipio nulli datur, omnibus usu.
respice item quam nil ad nos ante acta vetustas
temporis aeterni fuerit, quam nascimur ante.
hoc igitur speculum nobis natura futuri
975 temporis exponit post mortem denique nostram.
numquid ibi horribile apparet, num triste videtur
quicquam, non omni somno securius exstat?
Atque ea ni mirum quae cumque Acherunte profundo
prodita sunt esse, in vita sunt omnia nobis.
980 nec miser inpendens magnum timet aëre saxum
Tantalus, ut famast, cassa formidine torpens;

[944] For there is nothing more which I can contrive and discover for thee to give pleasure: all things are ever the same. Though thy body is not yet

decayed with years nor thy frame worn out and exhausted, yet all things remain the same, ay though in length of life thou shouldst outlast all races of things now living, nay even more if thou shouldst never die.”

What answer have we to make save this, that nature sets up against us a well-founded claim and puts forth in her pleading a true indictment?

If however one of greater age and more advanced in years should complain and lament, poor wretch, his death more than is right, would she not with greater cause raise her voice and rally him in sharp accents,

“Away from this time forth with thy tears, rascal; a truce to thy complaining: thou decayest after full enjoyment of all the prizes of life. But because thou ever yearnest for what is not present, and despisest what is, life has slipped from thy grasp unfinished and unsatisfying, and or ever thou thoughtest, death has taken his stand at thy pillow, before thou canst take thy departure sated and filled with good things. Now however resign all things unsuited to thy age, and with a good grace up and greatly go: thou must.”

With good reason methinks she would bring her charge, with reason rally and reproach; for old things give way and are supplanted by new without fail, and one thing must ever be replenished out of other things; and no one is delivered over to the pit and black Tartarus.

Matter is needed for after generations to grow; all of which though will follow thee when they have finished their term of life; and thus it is that all these no less than thou have before this come to an end and hereafter will come to an end.

Thus one thing will never cease to rise out of another, life is granted to none in fee-simple, to all in usufruct.

Think, too, how the bygone antiquity of everlasting time before our birth was nothing to us.

Nature therefore holds this up to us as a mirror of the time yet to come after our death.

Is there aught in this that looks appalling, aught that wears an aspect of gloom?

Is it not more untroubled than any sleep?

And those things sure enough, which are fabled to be in the deep of Acheron, do all exist for us in this life.

No Tantalus, numbed by groundless terror, as the story is, fears, poor wretch, a huge stone hanging in air;

sed magis in vita divom metus urget inanis
mortalis casumque timent quem cuique ferat fors.

nec Tityon volucres ineunt Acherunte iacentem

985 nec quod sub magno scrutentur pectore quicquam

perpetuam aetatem possunt reperire profecto.

quam libet immani proiectu corporis exstet,

qui non sola novem dispessis iugera membris

optineat, sed qui terrai totius orbem,
 990 non tamen aeternum poterit perferre dolorem
 nec praebere cibum proprio de corpore semper.
 sed Tityos nobis hic est, in amore iacentem
 quem volucres lacerant atque exest anxius angor
 aut alia quavis scindunt cuppedine curae.
 995 Sisyphus in vita quoque nobis ante oculos est,
 qui petere a populo fascēs saevasque securēs
 imbibit et semper victus tristisque recedit.
 nam petere imperium, quod inanest nec datur umquam,
 atque in eo semper durum sufferre laborem,
 1000 hoc est adverso nixantem trudere monte
 saxum, quod tamen e summo iam vertice rusum
 volvitur et plani raptim petit aequora campi.
 deinde animi ingratam naturam pascere semper
 atque explere bonis rebus satiareque numquam,
 1005 quod faciunt nobis annorum tempora, circum
 cum redeunt fetusque ferunt variosque lepores,
 nec tamen explemur vitae fructibus umquam,
 hoc, ut opinor, id est, aevo florente puellas
 quod memorant laticem pertusum congerere in vas,
 1010 quod tamen expleri nulla ratione potestur.
 Cerberus et Furiae iam vero et lucis egestas,
 Tartarus horriferos eructans faucibus aestus!
 qui neque sunt usquam nec possunt esse profecto;
 sed metus in vita poenarum pro male factis
 1015 est insignibus insignis scelerisque luela,
 carcer et horribilis de saxo iactus deorsum,
 verbera carnifices robur pix lammina taedae;
 quae tamen etsi absunt, at mens sibi conscia factis
 praemetuens adhibet stimulos torretque flagellis,
 1020 nec videt interea qui terminus esse malorum
 possit nec quae sit poenarum denique finis,
 atque eadem metuit magis haec ne in morte gravescant.
 hic Acherusia fit stultorum denique vita.

[981] but in life rather a baseless dread of the gods vexes mortals: the fall they fear is such fall of luck as chance brings to each.

Nor do birds eat away into Tityos laid in Acheron, nor can they, sooth to say, find during eternity food to peck under his large breast.

However huge the bulk of body he extends, though such as to take up with outspread limbs not nine acres merely, but the whole earth, yet will he not be able to endure everlasting pain and supply food from his own body for ever.

But he is for us a Tityos whom, as he grovels in love, vultures rend and

bitter bitter anguish eats up or troubled thoughts from any other passion do rive.

In life, too, we have a Sisyphus before our eyes who is bent on asking from the people the rods and cruel axes, and always retires defeated and disappointed.

For to ask for power, which empty as it is, is never given, and always in the chase of it to undergo severe toil, this is forcing uphill with much effort a stone which after all rolls back again from the summit and seeks in headlong haste the levels of the plain.

Then to be ever feeding the thankless nature of the mind, and never to fill it full and sate it with good things, as the seasons of the year do for us, when they come round and bring their fruits and varied delights, though after all we are never filled with the enjoyments of life, this methinks is to do what is told of the maidens in the flower of their age, to keep pouring water into a perforated vessel which in spite of all can never be filled full.

Moreover, Cerberus and the furies and yon privation of light [are idle tales, as well as all the rest, Ixion's wheel and black] Tartarus belching forth hideous fires from his throat: things which nowhere are nor, sooth to say, can be.

But there is in life a dread of punishment for evil deeds, signal as the deeds are signal, and for atonement of guilt, the prison and the frightful hurling down from the rock, scourgings, executioners, the dungeon of the doomed, the pitch, the metal plate, torches; and even though these are wanting, yet the conscience-stricken mind through boding fears applies to itself goads and frightens itself with whips, and sees not meanwhile what end there can be of ills or what limit at last is to be set to punishments, and fears lest these very evils be enhanced after death.

The life of fools at length becomes a hell here on earth.

Hoc etiam tibi tute interdum dicere possis.

1025 'lumina sis oculis etiam bonus Ancus reliquit,
qui melior multis quam tu fuit, improbe, rebus.
inde alii multi reges rerumque potentes
occiderunt, magnis qui gentibus imperitarunt.
ille quoque ipse, viam qui quondam per mare magnum
1030 stravit iterque dedit legionibus ire per altum
ac pedibus salsas docuit super ire lucunas
et contempsit equis insultans murmura ponti,
lumine adempto animam moribundo corpore fudit.
Scipiadas, belli fulmen, Carthagini horror,
1035 ossa dedit terrae proinde ac famul infimus esset.
adde repertoires doctrinarum atque leporum,
adde Heliconiadum comites; quorum unus Homerus
sceptra potitus eadem aliis sopitus quietest.

denique Democritum post quam matura vetustas
 1040 admonuit memores motus languescere mentis,
 sponte sua leto caput obuius optulit ipse.
 ipse Epicurus obit decurso lumine vitae,
 qui genus humanum ingenio superavit et omnis
 restinxit stellas exortus ut aetherius sol.
 1045 tu vero dubitabis et indignabere obire?
 mortua cui vita est prope iam vivo atque videnti,
 qui somno partem maiorem conteris aevi,
 et viligans stertis nec somnia cernere cessas
 sollicitamque geris cassa formidine mentem
 1050 nec reperire potes tibi quid sit saepe mali, cum
 ebrius urgeris multis miser undique curis
 atque animo incerto fluitans errore vagaris.’
 Si possent homines, proinde ac sentire videntur
 pondus inesse animo, quod se gravitate fatiget,
 1055 e quibus id fiat causis quoque noscere et unde
 tanta mali tam quam moles in pectore constet,
 haut ita vitam agerent, ut nunc plerumque videmus
 quid sibi quisque velit nescire et quaerere semper,
 commutare locum, quasi onus deponere possit.
 1060 exit saepe foras magnis ex aedibus ille,
 esse domi quem pertaesumst, subitoque revertit,
 quippe foris nihilo melius qui sentiat esse.
 currit agens mannos ad villam praecipitanter
 auxilium tectis quasi ferre ardentibus instans;

[1024] This too you may sometimes say to yourself, “Even worthy Ancus has
 quitted the light with his eyes, who was far far better than thou,
 unconscionable man.”

And since then many other king and kesars have been laid low, who lorded
 it over mighty nations.

He too, even he who erst paved a way over the great sea and made a path
 for his legions to march over the deep and taught them to pass on foot over the
 salt pools and set at naught the roarings of the sea, trampling on them with his
 horses, had the light taken from him and shed forth his soul from his dying
 body.

The son of the Scipios, thunderbolt of war, terror of Carthage, yielded his
 bones to earth just as if he were the lowest menial.

Think, too, of the inventors of all sciences and graceful arts, think of the
 companions of the Heliconian maids; among whom Homer bore the scepter
 without a peer, and he now sleeps the same sleep as others.

Then there is Democritus who, when a ripe old age had warned him that
 the memory-waking motions of his mind were waning, by his own

spontaneous act offered up his head to death.

Even Epicurus passed away when his light of life had run its course, he who surpassed in intellect the race of man and quenched the light of all, as the ethereal sun arisen quenches the stars.

Wilt thou then hesitate and think it a hardship to die? Thou for whom life is well nigh dead whilst yet thou livest and seest the light, who spendest the greater part of thy time in sleep and snoorest wide awake and ceaseest not to see visions and hast a mind troubled with groundless terror and canst not discover often what it is that ails thee, when besotted man thou art sore pressed on all sides with full many cares and goest astray tumbling about in the wayward wanderings of thy mind.

If, just as they are seen to feel that a load is on their mind which wears them out with its pressure, men might apprehend from what causes too it is produced and whence such a pile, if I may say so, of ill lies on their breast, they would not spend their life as we see them now for the most part do, not knowing any one of them what he means and wanting ever change of place as though he might lay his burden down.

The man who is sick of home often issues forth from his large mansion, and as suddenly comes back to it, finding as he does that he is no better off abroad.

He races to his country-house, driving his jennets in headlong haste, as if hurrying to bring help to a house on fire:

1065 oscitat extemplo, tetigit cum limina villae,
aut abit in somnum gravis atque oblivia quaerit,
aut etiam properans urbem petit atque revisit.
hoc se quisque modo fugit, at quem scilicet, ut fit,
effugere haut potis est: ingratus haeret et odit
1070 propterea, morbi quia causam non tenet aeger;
quam bene si videat, iam rebus quisque relictis
naturam primum studeat cognoscere rerum,
temporis aeterni quoniam, non unius horae,
ambigitur status, in quo sit mortalibus omnis
1075 aetas, post mortem quae restat cumque manendo.
Denique tanto opere in dubiis trepidare periculis
quae mala nos subigit vitae tanta cupido?
certe equidem finis vitae mortalibus adstat
nec devitari letum pote, quin obeamus.
1080 praeterea versamur ibidem atque insumus usque
nec nova vivendo procuditur ulla voluptas;
sed dum abest quod avemus, id exsuperare videtur
cetera; post aliud, cum contigit illud, avemus
et sitis aequa tenet vitae semper hiantis.
1085 posteraque in dubiis fortunam quam vehat aetas,

quidve ferat nobis casus quive exitus instet.
nec prorsum vitam ducendo demimus hilum
tempore de mortis nec delibare valemus,
quo minus esse diu possimus forte perempti.
1090 proinde licet quod vis vivendo condere saecula,
mors aeterna tamen nihilo minus illa manebit,
nec minus ille diu iam non erit, ex hodierno
lumine qui finem vitae fecit, et ille,
mensibus atque annis qui multis occidit ante.

[1064] he yawns the moment he has reached the door of his house, or sinks heavily into sleep and seeks forgetfulness, or even in haste goes back again to town.

In this way each man flies from himself, (but self from whom, as you may be sure is commonly the case, he cannot escape, clings to him in his own despite) hates too himself, because he is sick and knows not the cause of the malady.

For if he could rightly see into this, relinquishing all else, each man would study to learn the nature of things, since the point at stake is the condition for eternity, not for one hour, in which mortals have to pass all the time which remains for them to expect after death.

Once more, what evil lust of life is this which constrains us with such force to be so mightily troubled in doubts and dangers?

A sure term of life, is fixed for mortals, and death cannot be shunned, but meet it we must.

Moreover, we are ever engaged, ever involved in the same pursuits, and no new pleasure is struck out by living on; but whilst what we crave is wanting, it seems to transcend all the rest; then, when it has been gotten, we crave something else, and ever does the same thirst of life possess us, as we gape for it open-mouthed.

Quite doubtful it is what fortune the future will carry with it or what chance will bring us or what end is at hand.

Nor by prolonging life do we take one tittle from the time past in death nor can we fret anything away, whereby we may haply be a less long time in the condition of the dead.

Therefore you may complete as many generations as you please during your life; none the less however will that everlasting death await you; and for no less long a time will he be no more in being, who beginning with today has ended his life, than the man who has died many months and years ago.

Liber Quartus — BOOK IV.

Avia Pieridum peragro loca nullius ante
trita solo. iuvat integros accedere fontis
atque haurire, iuvatque novos decerpere flores
insignemque meo capiti petere inde coronam,
5 unde prius nulli velarint tempora musae;
primum quod magnis doceo de rebus et artis
religionum animum nodis exsolvere pergo,
deinde quod obscura de re tam lucida pango
carmina musaeo contingens cuncta lepore.
10 id quoque enim non ab nulla ratione videtur;
nam vel uti pueris absinthia taetra medentes
cum dare conantur, prius oras pocula circum
contingunt mellis dulci flavoque liquore,
ut puerorum aetas improvida ludificetur
15 labrorum tenuis, interea perpotet amarum
absinthii laticem deceptaque non capiatur,
sed potius tali facto recreata valescat,
sic ego nunc, quoniam haec ratio plerumque videtur
tristior esse quibus non est tractata, retroque
20 volgus abhorret ab hac, volui tibi suaviloquenti
carmine Pierio rationem exponere nostram
et quasi musaeo dulci contingere melle;
si tibi forte animum tali ratione tenere
versibus in nostris possem, dum percipis omnem
25 naturam rerum ac persentis utilitatem.
Sed quoniam docui cunctarum exordia rerum
qualia sint et quam variis distantia formis
sponte sua volitent aeterno percita motu
quoque modo possit res ex his quaeque creari,

[1] I TRAVERSE the pathless haunts of the Pierides never yet trodden by sole of man.

I love to approach the untasted springs and to quaff; I love to cull fresh flowers and gather for my head a distinguished crown from spots whence the muses have yet veiled the brows of none; first because I teach of great things and essay to release the mind from the fast bonds of religious scruples, and next because on a dark subject I pen such lucid verses, overlaying all with the muses' charm.

For that too would seem to be not without good grounds: even as physicians when they propose to give nauseous wormwood to children, first smear the rim round the bowl with the sweet yellow juice of honey, that the

unthinking age of children may be fooled as far as the lips, and meanwhile drink up the bitter draught of wormwood and though beguiled yet not be betrayed, but rather by such means recover health and strength: so now, since this doctrine seems generally somewhat bitter to those by whom it has not been handled, and the multitude shrinks back from it in dismay, have resolved to set forth to you our doctrine in sweet-toned Pierian verse and overlay it, as it were, with the pleasant honey of the muses, if haply by such means I might engage your mind on my verses, till such time as you apprehend all the nature of things and thoroughly feel what use it has.

And now that I have taught what the nature of the mind is and out of what things it is formed into one quickened being with the body, and how it is dissevered and returns into its first-beginnings, I will attempt to lay before you a truth which most nearly concerns these questions, the existence of things which we call idols of things:

30 nunc agere incipiam tibi quod vehementer ad has res
attinet esse ea quae rerum simulacra vocamus,
quae quasi membranae vel cortex nominandast,
atque animi quoniam docui natura quid esset
et quibus e rebus cum corpore compta vigeret
35 quove modo distracta rediret in ordia prima,
nunc agere incipiam tibi, quod vehementer ad has res
attinet esse ea quae rerum simulacra vocamus,
quod speciem ac formam similem gerit eius imago,
cuius cumque cluet de corpore fusa vagari;
40 quae quasi membranae summo de corpore rerum
dereptae volitant ultroque citroque per auras,
atque eadem nobis vigilantibus obvia mentes
terrificant atque in somnis, cum saepe figuras
contuimur miras simulacraque luce carentum,
45 quae nos horrificè languentis saepe sopore
excierunt ne forte animas Acherunte reamur
effugere aut umbras inter vivos volitare
neve aliquid nostri post mortem posse relinqui,
cum corpus simul atque animi natura perempta
50 in sua discessum dederint primordia quaeque.
dico igitur rerum effigias tenuisque figuras
mittier ab rebus summo de cortice eorum;
id licet hinc quamvis hebeti cognoscere corde.
Principio quoniam mittunt in rebus apertis
55 corpora res multae, partim diffusa solute,
robora ceu fumum mittunt ignesque vaporem,
et partim contexta magis condensaque, ut olim
cum teretis ponunt tunicas aestate cicadae,

et vituli cum membranas de corpore summo
 60 nascentes mittunt, et item cum lubrica serpens
 exiit in spinis vestem; nam saepe videmus
 illorum spoliis vepres volitantibus auctas.
 quae quoniam fiunt, tenuis quoque debet imago
 ab rebus mitti summo de corpore rerum.
 65 nam cur illa cadant magis ab rebusque recedant
 quam quae tenuia sunt, hiscendist nulla potestas;
 praesertim cum sint in summis corpora rebus
 multa minuta, iaci quae possint ordine eodem
 quo fuerint et formae servare figuram,
 70 et multo citius, quanto minus indupediri
 pauca queunt et quae sunt prima fronte locata.
 nam certe iacere ac largiri multa videmus,
 non solum ex alto penitusque, ut diximus ante,
 verum de summis ipsum quoque saepe colorem.
 75 et volgo faciunt id lutea russaque vela
 et ferrugina, cum magnis intenta theatri
 per malos volgata trabesque trementia flutant;

[30] these, like films peeled from the surface of things, fly to and fro through the air, and do likewise frighten our minds when they present themselves to us awake as well as in sleep, what time we behold strange shapes and idols of the light-bereaved, which have often startled us in appalling wise as we lay relaxed in sleep: this I will essay, that we may not haply believe that souls break loose from Acheron or that shades fly about among the living or that something of us is left behind after death, when the body and the nature of the mind destroyed together have taken their departure into their several first-beginnings.

I say then that pictures of things and thin shapes are emitted from things off their surface, to which an image serves as a kind of film, or name it if you like a rind, because such image bears an appearance and form like to the thing whatever it is from whose body it is shed and wanders forth.

This you may learn, however dull of apprehension, from what follows.

First of all, since among things open to sight many emit bodies, some in a state of loose diffusion, like smoke which logs of oak, heat which fires emit; some of a closer and denser texture, like the gossamer coats which at times cicades doff in summer, and the films which calves at their birth cast from the surface of their body, as well as the vesture which the slippery serpent puts off among the thorns; for often we see the brambles enriched with their flying spoils: since these cases occur, a thin image likewise must be emitted from things off their surface.

For why those films should drop off and withdraw from things rather than films which are really thin, not one tittle of proof can be given; especially

since there are on the surface of things many minute bodies which maybe discharged in the same order they had before and preserve the outline of the shape, and be discharged with far more velocity, inasmuch as they are less liable to get hampered being few in number and stationed in the front rank.

For without doubt we see many things discharge and freely give not only from the core and center, as we said before, but from their surfaces, besides other things, color itself.

And this is commonly done by yellow and red and dark blue awnings, when they are spread over large theaters and flutter and wave as they stretch across their poles and crossbeams;

namque ibi consessum caveai supter et omnem
scaenai speciem patrum matrumque deorsum
80 inficiunt coguntque suo fluitare colore.
et quanto circum mage sunt inclusa theatri
moenia, tam magis haec intus perfusa lepore
omnia conrident correpta luce diei.
ergo lintea de summo cum corpore fucum
85 mittunt, effigias quoque debent mittere tenvis
res quaeque, ex summo quoniam iaculantur utraque.
sunt igitur iam formarum vestigia certa,
quae volgo volitant subtili praedita filo
nec singillatim possunt secreta videri.
90 Praeterea omnis odor fumus vapor atque aliae res
consimiles ideo diffusae rebus abundant,
ex alto quia dum veniunt extrinsecus ortae
scinduntur per iter flexum, nec recta viarum
ostia sunt, qua contendant exire coortae.
95 at contra tenuis summi membrana coloris
cum iacitur, nihil est quod eam discernere possit,
in promptu quoniam est in prima fronte locata.
Postremo speculis in aqua splendoreque in omni
quae cumque apparent nobis simulacra, necessest,
100 quandoquidem simili specie sunt praedita rerum,
exin imaginibus missis consistere eorum.
nam cur illa cadant magis ab rebusque recedant
quam quae tenuia sunt, hiscendist nulla potestas.
sunt igitur tenues formarum illis similesque
105 effigiae, singillatim quas cernere nemo
cum possit, tamen adsiduo crebroque repulsu
reiectae reddunt speculorum ex aequare visum,
nec ratione alia servari posse videntur,
tanto opere ut similes reddantur cuique figurae.
110 Nunc age, quam tenui natura constet imago

percepe. et in primis, quoniam primordia tantum
sunt infra nostros sensus tantoque minora
quam quae primum oculi coeptant non posse tueri,
nunc tamen id quoque uti confirmem, exordia rerum
115 cunctarum quam sint subtilia percipe paucis.
primum animalia sunt iam partim tantula, corum
tertia pars nulla possit ratione videri.
horum intestinum quodvis quale esse putandumst!
quid cordis globus aut oculi? quid membra? quid artus?
120 quantula sunt! quid praeterea primordia quaeque,
unde anima atque animi constet natura necessumst,
nonne vides quam sint subtilia quamque minuta?

[78] for then they dye the seated assemblage below and all the show of the stage and the richly attired company of the fathers, and compel them to dance about in their color.

And the more these objects are shut in all round by the walls of the theater the more do all of them within laugh on all hands, overlaid with graceful hues, the light of day being narrowed.

Therefore since sheets of canvass emit color from their surface, all things will naturally emit thin pictures too, since in each case alike they discharge from the surface.

There are therefore as now shown sure outlines of shapes, which fly all about possessed of an exquisitely small thickness and cannot when separate be seen one at a time.

Again, all smell, smoke, heat, and other such-like things stream off things in a state of diffusion, because while they are coming from the depths of the body having arisen within it, they are torn in their winding passage, and there are no straight orifices to the paths, for them to make their way out by in a mass.

But on the other hand, when a thin film of surface color is discharged, there is nothing to rend it, since it is ready to hand, stationed in front rank.

Lastly, in the case of all idols which show themselves to us in mirrors, in water or any other shining object, since their outsides are possessed of an appearance like to the things they represent, they must be formed of emitted images of things.

There are therefore thin shapes and pictures like to the things, which, though no one can see them one at a time, yet when thrown off by constant and repeated reflection give back a visible image from the surface of mirrors; and in no other way it would seem can they be kept so entire that shapes are given back so exceedingly like each object.

Now mark, and learn how thin in the nature of an image is.

And first of all, since first-beginnings are so far below the ken of our senses and much smaller than the things which our eyes first begin to be unable to

see, to strengthen yet more the proof of this also, learn in a few words how minutely fine are the beginnings of all things.

First, living things are in some cases so very little, that their third part cannot be seen at all.

Of what size are we to suppose any gut of such creatures to be? Or the ball of the heart or the eyes? The limbs? Or any part of the frame? How small they must be!

And then further, the several first-beginnings of which their soul and the nature of their mind must be formed?

praeterea quaecumque suo de corpore odorem
expirant acrem, panaces absinthia taetra
125 habrotonique graves et tristia centaurea,
quorum unum quidvis leviter si forte duobus

* * *

quin potius noscas rerum simulacra vagari
multa modis multis, nulla vi cassaue sensu?
Sed ne forte putes ea demum sola vagari,
130 quae cumque ab rebus rerum simulacra recedunt,
sunt etiam quae sponte sua gignuntur et ipsa
constituuntur in hoc caelo, qui dicitur aer,
quae multis formata modis sublime feruntur,
ut nubes facile inter dum concreescere in alto
135 cernimus et mundi speciem violare serenam
aëra mulcentes motu; nam saepe Gigantum
ora volare videntur et umbram ducere late,
inter dum magni montes avolsaque saxa
montibus ante ire et solem succedere praeter,
140 inde alios trahere atque inducere belua nimbos.
nec speciem mutare suam liquentia cessant
et cuiusque modi formarum vertere in oras.
Nunc ea quam facili et celeri ratione genantur
perpetuoque fluant ab rebus lapsaque cedant

* * *

145 semper enim summum quicquid de rebus abundat,
quod iaculentur. et hoc alias cum pervenit in res,
transit, ut in primis vestem; sed ubi aspera saxa
aut in materiam ligni pervenit, ibi iam
scinditur, ut nullum simulacrum reddere possit.
150 at cum splendida quae constant opposta fuerunt
densaque, ut in primis speculum est, nihil accidit horum;

nam neque, uti vestem, possunt transire, neque autem
scindi; quam meminit levor praestare salutem.
qua propter fit ut hinc nobis simulacra redundant.
155 et quamvis subito quovis in tempore quamque
rem contra speculum ponas, apparet imago;
perpetuo fluere ut noscas e corpore summo
texturas rerum tenuis tenuisque figuras.
ergo multa brevi spatio simulacra genuntur,
160 ut merito celer his rebus dicatur origo.
et quasi multa brevi spatio summittere debet
lumina sol, ut perpetuo sint omnia plena,
sic ab rebus item simili ratione necessest
temporis in puncto rerum simulacra ferantur
165 multa modis multis in cunctas undique partis;

[122] Do you not perceive how fine, how minute they are?

Again in the case of all things which exhale from their body a pungent smell, all-heal, nauseous wormwood, strong scented southernwood and the bitter centauries, any one of which, if you happen to [feel it] lightly between two [fingers, will impregnate them with a strong smell] but rather you are to know that idols of things wander about many in number in many ways, of no force, powerless to excite sense.

But lest haply you suppose that only those idols of things which go off from things and no others wander about, there are likewise those which are spontaneously begotten and are formed by themselves in this lower heaven which is called air: these fashioned in many ways are borne along on high and being in a fluid state cease not to alter their appearance and change it into the outline of shapes of every possible kind; as we see clouds sometimes gather into masses on high and blot the calm clear face of heaven, fanning the air with their motion.

Thus often the faces of giants are seen to fly along and draw after them a far-spreading shadow; sometimes great mountains and rocks torn from the mountains are seen to go in advance and pass across the sun; and then some huge beast is observed to draw with it and bring on the other storm clouds.

Now [I will proceed to show] with what ease and celerity they are begotten and how incessantly they flow and fall away from things.

The outermost surface is ever streaming off from things and admits of being discharged: when this reaches some things, it passes through them, glass especially.

But when it reaches rough stones or the matter of wood, it is then so torn that it cannot give back any idol.

But when objects at once shining and dense have been put in its way, a mirror especially, none of these results has place: it can neither pass through it, like glass, nor can it be torn either; such perfect safety the polished surface

minds to ensure.

In consequence of this idols stream back to us from such objects; and however suddenly at any moment you place anything opposite a mirror, an image shows itself: hence you may be sure that thin textures and thin shapes of things incessantly stream from their surface.

Therefore many idols are begotten in a short time, so that the birth of such things is with good reason named a rapid one.

And as the sun must send forth many rays of light in a short time in order that all things may be continually filled with it, so also for alike reason there must be carried away from things in a moment of time idols of things many in number in many ways in all directions round;

quandoquidem speculum quo cumque obvertimus oris,
res ibi respondent simili forma atque colore.

Praeterea modo cum fuerit liquidissima caeli

tempestas, perquam subito fit turbida foede,

¹⁷⁰ undique uti tenebras omnis Acherunta rearis

liquisse et magnas caeli complesse cavernas.

usque adeo taetra nimborum nocte coorta

independent atrae Formidinis ora superne;

quorum quantula pars sit imago dicere nemost

¹⁷⁵ qui possit neque eam rationem reddere dictis.

Nunc age, quam celeri motu simulacra ferantur,

et quae mobilitas ollis tranantibus auras

reddita sit, longo spatio ut brevis hora teratur,

in quem quaeque locum diverso numine tendunt,

¹⁸⁰ suavidicis potius quam multis versibus edam;

parvus ut est cycni melior canor, ille gruum quam

clamor in aetheriis dispersus nubibus austru.

Principio persaepe levis res atque minutis

corporibus factas celeris licet esse videre.

¹⁸⁵ in quo iam genere est solis lux et vapor eius,

propterea quia sunt e primis facta minutis,

quae quasi cuduntur perque aëris intervallum

non dubitant transire sequenti concita plaga;

suppeditatur enim confestim lumine lumen

¹⁹⁰ et quasi protelo stimulator fulgere fulgur.

qua propter simulacra pari ratione necessest

inmemorabile per spatium transcurrere posse

temporis in puncto, primum quod parvola causa

est procul a tergo quae provehat atque propellat,

¹⁹⁵ quod super est, ubi tam volucris levitate ferantur,

deinde quod usque adeo textura praedita rara

mittuntur, facile ut quasvis penetrare queant res

et quasi permanere per aëris intervallum.
Praeterea si quae penitus corpuscula rerum
200 ex altoque foras mittuntur, solis uti lux
ac vapor, haec puncto cernuntur lapsa diei
per totum caeli spatium diffundere sese
perque volare mare ac terras caelumque rigare.
quid quae sunt igitur iam prima fronte parata,
205 cum iaciuntur et emissum res nulla moratur?

[165] since to whatever part of them we present a mirror before their surfaces, other things correspond to these in the mirror of a like shape and like color.

Moreover, though the state of heaven has just before been of unsullied purity, with exceeding suddenness it becomes so hideously overcast, that you might imagine all its darkness had abandoned Acheron throughout and filled up the great vaults of heaven: in such numbers do faces of black horror rise up from amid the frightful night of storm clouds and hang over us on high.

Now there is no one who can tell how small a fraction of these an image is, or express that sum in language.

Now mark: how swift the motion is with which idols are borne along, and what velocity is assigned to them as they glide through the air, so that but a short hour is spent on a journey through long space, whatever the spot towards which they go with a movement of varied tendency, all this I will tell in sweetly worded rather than in many verses; as the short song of the swan is better than the loud noise of cranes scattered abroad amid the ethereal clouds of the south.

First of all we may very often observe that things which are light and made of minute bodies are swift.

Of this kind are the light of the sun and its heat, because they are made of minute first things which are knocked forward so to speak and do not hesitate to pass through the space of air between, ever driven on by a blow following behind; for light on the instant is supplied by fresh light and brightness goaded to show its brightness in what you might call an ever on-moving team.

Therefore in like manner idols must be able to scour in a moment of time through space unspeakable, first because they are exceeding small and there is a cause at their back to carry and impel them far forward; where moreover they move on with such winged lightness; next because when emitted they are possessed of so rare a texture, that they can readily pass through any things and stream as it were through the space of air between.

Again, if those minute bodies of things which are given out from the inmost depths of these things, as the light and heat of the sun, are seen in a moment of time to glide and spread themselves through the length and breadth of heaven, fly over sea and lands and flood the heaven, what then of those which stand ready posted in front rank, when they are discharged and nothing

obstructs their egress?

quone vides citius debere et longius ire
multiplexque loci spatium transcurrere eodem
tempore quo solis pervolgant lumina caelum?
Hoc etiam in primis specimen verum esse videtur,
210 quam celeri motu rerum simulacra ferantur,
quod simul ac primum sub diu splendor aquai
ponitur, extemplo caelo stellante serena
sidera respondent in aqua radiantia mundi.
iamne vides igitur quam puncto tempore imago
215 aetheris ex oris in terrarum accidat oras?
quare etiam atque etiam mitti fateare necessest
corpora quae feriant oculos visumque lacesant.
perpetuoque fluunt certis ab rebus odores,
frigus ut a fluviis, calor ab sole, aestus ab undis
220 aequoris, exesor moerorum litora circum,
nec variae cessant voces volitare per auras.
denique in os salsi venit umor saepe saporis,
cum mare versamur propter, dilutaque contra
cum tuimur misceri absinthia, tangit amaror.
225 usque adeo omnibus ab rebus res quaeque fluenter
fertur et in cunctas dimittitur undique partis
nec mora nec requies interdatur ulla fluendi,
perpetuo quoniam sentimus et omnia semper
cernere odorari licet et sentire sonare.
230 Praeterea quoniam manibus tractata figura
in tenebris quaedam cognoscitur esse eadem quae
cernitur in luce et claro candore, necessest
consimili causa tactum visumque moveri.
nunc igitur si quadratum temptamus et id nos
235 commovet in tenebris, in luci quae poterit res
accidere ad speciem quadrata, nisi eius imago?
esse in imaginibus qua propter causa videtur
cernundi neque posse sine his res ulla videri.
Nunc ea quae dico rerum simulacra feruntur
240 undique et in cunctas iaciuntur didita partis;
verum nos oculis quia solis cernere quimus,
propterea fit uti, speciem quo vertimus, omnes
res ibi eam contra feriant forma atque colore.

[206] How much faster, you see, and farther must they travel, scouring through many times the same amount of space in the same time that the sunlight takes to spread over heaven !

This too appears to be an eminently true proof of the velocity with which

idols of things are borne along: as soon as ever the brightness of water is set down in the open air, if the heaven is starry, in a moment the clear radiant constellations of ether imaged in the water correspond to those in the heaven.

Now do you see in what a moment of time an image drops down from the borders of heaven to the borders of earth? Therefore, again and again I repeat you must admit that bodies capable of striking the eyes and of provoking vision [constantly travel] with a marvelous [velocity].

Smells too incessantly stream from certain things; as does cold from rivers, heat from the sun, spray from the waves of the sea, that enter into walls near the shore.

Various sounds also cease not to fly through the air.

Then too a moist salt flavor often comes into the mouth, when we are moving about beside the sea; and when we look on at the mixing of a decoction of wormwood, its bitterness affects us.

In such a constant stream from all things the several qualities are carried and are transmitted in all directions round, and no delay, no respite in the flow is ever granted, since we constantly have feeling, and may at any time see smell and hear the sound of anything.

Again since a particular figure felt by the hands in the dark is known to be the same which is seen in the bright light of day, touch and sight must be excited by a quite similar cause.

Well then if we handle a square thing and it excites our attention in the dark, in the daylight what square thing will be able to fall on our sight, except the image of that thing? Therefore the cause of it is plain lies in images and no thing can be perceived without them.

Well, the idols of things I speak of are borne along all round and are discharged and transmitted in all directions; but because we can see with the eyes alone, the consequence is that, to whatever point we turn our sight, there all the several things meet and strike it with their shape and color.

et quantum quaeque ab nobis res absit, imago
245 efficit ut videamus et internoscere curat;
nam cum mittitur, extemplo protrudit agitique
aëra qui inter se cumque est oculosque locatus,
isque ita per nostras acies perlabitur omnis
et quasi perterget pupillas atque ita transit.
250 propterea fit uti videamus quam procul absit
res quaeque. et quanto plus aëris ante agitur
et nostros oculos perterget longior aura,
tam procul esse magis res quaeque remota videtur.
scilicet haec summe celeri ratione geruntur,
255 quale sit ut videamus, et una quam procul absit.
Illud in his rebus minime mirabile habendumst,
cur, ea quae feriant oculos simulacra videri

singula cum nequeant, res ipsae perspiciantur.
ventus enim quoque paulatim cum verberat et cum
260 acre fluit frigus, non privam quamque solemus
particulam venti sentire et frigoris eius,
sed magis unorsum, fierique perinde videmus
corpore tum plagas in nostro tam quam aliquae res
verberet atque sui det sensum corporis extra.
265 praeterea lapidem digito cum tundimus, ipsum
tangimus extremum saxi summumque colorem
nec sentimus eum tactu, verum magis ipsam
duritiam penitus saxi sentimus in alto.
Nunc age, cur ultra speculum videatur imago
270 percipe: nam certe penitus remmota videtur.
quod genus illa foris quae vere transpiciuntur,
ianua cum per se transpectum praebet apertum,
multa facitque foris ex aedibus ut videantur;
is quoque enim duplici geminoque fit aëre visus.
275 primus enim citra postes tum cernitur aër,
inde fores ipsae dextra laevaue secuntur,
post extraria lux oculos perterget et aër
alter, et illa foris quae vere transpiciuntur.
sic ubi se primum speculi proiecit imago,
280 dum venit ad nostras acies, protrudit agitique
aëra qui inter se cumquest oculosque locatus,
et facit, ut prius hunc omnem sentire queamus
quam speculum; sed ubi in speculum quoque sensimus ipsum,
continuo a nobis in eum quae fertur imago
285 pervenit, et nostros oculos reiecta revisit
atque alium prae se propellens aëra volvit,
et facit ut prius hunc quam se videamus, eoque
distare ab speculo tantum semota videtur.

[243] And the image gives the power to see and the means to distinguish how far each thing is distant from us; for as soon as ever it is discharged, it pushes before it and impels all the air which lies between it and the eyes; and thus that air all streams through our eyes and brushes so to say the pupils and so passes through.

The consequence is that we see how far distant each thing is.

And the greater the quantity of air which is driven on before it and the larger the current which brushes our eyes, the more distant each different thing is seen to be.

You must know these processes go on with extreme rapidity, so that at one and the same moment we see what like a thing is and how far distant it is.

And this must by no means be deemed strange herein that, while the idols

which strike the eyes cannot be seen one at a time, the things themselves are seen.

For thus when the wind too beats us with successive strokes and when piercing cold streams, we are not wont to feel each single particle of that wind and cold, but rather the whole result; and then we perceive blows take effect on our body just as if something or other were beating it and giving us a sensation of its body outside.

Again when we thump a stone with a finger, we touch merely the outermost color on the surface of the stone, and yet we do not feel that color by our touch, but rather we feel the very hardness of the stone seated in its inmost depths.

Now mark, and learn why the image is seen beyond the mirror; for without doubt it is seen withdrawn far within.

The case is just the same as with things which are viewed in their reality beyond a door, when it offers through it an unobstructed prospect and lets many things outside be seen from a house.

That vision too is effected by two separate airs: first there is an air seen in such a case inside the doorway; next come the leaves of the door right and left; next a light outside brushes the eyes, then a second air, then those things outside which are viewed in their reality.

Thus when the image of the mirror has first discharged itself, in coming to our sight it pushes forward and impels all the air which lies between it and the eyes, and enables us to see the whole of it before the mirror.

But when we have perceived the mirror as well, at once the image which is conveyed from us reaches the mirror and then is reflected and comes back to our eyes, and drives on and rolls in front of it a second air and lets us see this before itself, and for this reason it looks so far withdrawn from the mirror.

quare etiam atque etiam minime mirarier est par

* * *

290 illis quae reddunt speculorum ex aequore visum,
aëribus binis quoniam res confit utraque.

Nunc ea quae nobis membrorum dextera pars est,
in speculis fit ut in laeva videatur eo quod
planitiem ad speculi veniens cum offendit imago,
295 non convertitur incolumis, sed recta retrorsum
sic eliditur, ut siquis, prius arida quam sit
cretea persona, adlidat pilaeve trabive,
atque ea continuo rectam si fronte figuram
servet et elisam retro sese exprimat ipsa.

300 fiet ut, ante oculus fuerit qui dexter, ut idem
nunc sit laevus et e laevo sit mutua dexter.

Fit quoque de speculo in speculum ut tradatur imago,

quinque etiam aut sex ut fieri simulacra suerint.
 nam quae cumque retro parte interiore latebunt,
 305 inde tamen, quamvis torte penitusque remota,
 omnia per flexos aditus educta licebit
 pluribus haec speculis videantur in aedibus esse.
 usque adeo speculo in speculum translucet imago,
 et cum laeva data est, fit rusum ut dextera fiat,
 310 inde retro rursum redit et convertit eodem.
 Quin etiam quae cumque latuscula sunt speculorum
 adsimili lateris flexura praedita nostri,
 dextera ea propter nobis simulacra remittunt,
 aut quia de speculo in speculum transfertur imago,
 315 inde ad nos elisa bis advolat, aut etiam quod
 circum agitur, cum venit, imago propterea quod
 flexa figura docet speculi convertier ad nos.
 Indugredi porro pariter simulacra pedemque
 ponere nobiscum credas gestumque imitari
 320 propterea quia, de speculi qua parte recedas,
 continuo nequeunt illinc simulacra reverti;
 omnia quandoquidem cogit natura referri
 ac resilire ab rebus ad aequos reddita flexus.
 Splendida porro oculi fugitant vitantque tueri.
 325 sol etiam caecat, contra si tendere pergas,
 propterea quia vis magnast ipsius et alte

[288] Wherefore again and again I repeat there is no cause at all to wonder why the images give back the reflection from the surface of mirrors in the spot they do, since in both the given cases the result is produced by two airs.

To proceed, the right side of our body is seen in mirrors to be on the left, because when the image comes and strikes on the plane of the mirror, it is not turned back unaltered, but is beaten out in a right line backwards, just as if you were to take a plaster mask before it is dry and dash it on a pillar or beam, and it forthwith were to preserve the lines of its features undistorted in front and were to strike out an exact copy of itself straight backwards.

The result will be that the eye which was right will now be left; and conversely the left become the right.

An image may also be so transmitted from one mirror to another that five or six idols are often produced.

And thus all the things which lurk in the inmost corners of a house, however far they are withdrawn into tortuous recesses, may yet be all brought out through winding passages by the aid of a number of mirrors and be seen to be in the house.

So unfailingly does the image reflect itself from mirror to mirror; and when the left side is presented, it becomes the right in the new image; then it is

changed back again and turns round to what it was.

Moreover all little sides of mirrors which possess a curvature resembling our side, send back to us idols with their right corresponding to our right either for this reason, because the image is transmitted from one mirror to another, and then after it has been twice struck out flies to us, or else because the image, when it has come to the mirror, wheels about, because the curved shape of the mirror teaches it to turn round and face us.

Again you would think that idols step out and put down their foot at the same time with us and mimic our action, because from before whatever part of a mirror you move away, from that part forthwith no idols can be reflected; since nature constrains all things, when they are carried back and recoil from things, to be given back at angles equal to those at which they impinged.

Bright things again the eyes eschew and shun to look upon: the sun even blinds them, if you persist in turning them towards it, because its power is great and idols are borne through the clear air with great downward force from on high, and strike the eyes, and disorder their fastenings.

aëra per purum simulacra feruntur
et feriunt oculos turbantia composituras.
Praeterea splendor qui cumque est acer adurit
330 saepe oculos ideo quod semina possidet ignis
multa, dolorem oculis quae gignunt insinuando.
lurida praeterea fiunt quae cumque tuentur
arquati, quia luroris de corpore eorum
semina multa fluunt simulacris obvia rerum,
335 multaque sunt oculis in eorum denique mixta,
quae contage sua palloribus omnia pingunt.
E tenebris autem quae sunt in luce tuemur
propterea quia, cum propior caliginis aër
ater init oculos prior et possedit apertos,
340 insequitur candens confestim lucidus aër,
qui quasi purgat eos ac nigras discutit umbras
aëris illius; nam multis partibus hic est
mobiliior multisque minutiior et mage pollens.
qui simul atque vias oculorum luce replevit
345 atque pate fecit, quas ante obsederat aër
ATER, continuo rerum simulacra secuntur,
quae sita sunt in luce, lacessuntque ut videamus.
quod contra facere in tenebris e luce nequimus
propterea quia posterior caliginis aër
350 crassior insequitur, qui cuncta foramina complet
obsiditque vias oculorum, ne simulacra
possint ullarum rerum coniecta moveri.
Quadratasque procul turris cum cernimus urbis,

propterea fit uti videantur saepe rutundae,
355 angulus optusus quia longe cernitur omnis
sive etiam potius non cernitur ac perit eius
plaga nec ad nostras acies perlabitur ictus,
aëra per multum quia dum simulacra feruntur,
cogit hebescere eum crebris offensibus aër.
360 hoc ubi suffugit sensum simul angulus omnis.
fit quasi ut ad turnum saxorum structa tuantur;
non tamen ut coram quae sunt vereque rutunda,
sed quasi adumbratim paulum simulata videntur.
Umbra videtur item nobis in sole moveri
365 et vestigia nostra sequi gestumque imitari,
aëra si credis privatum lumine posse
indugredi, motus hominum gestumque sequentem;
nam nihil esse potest aliud nisi lumine cassus
aër id quod nos umbram perhibere suëmus.
370 ni mirum, quia terra locis ex ordine certis
lumine privatur solis qua cumque meantes
officimus, repletur item quod liquimus eius,
propterea fit uti videatur, quae fuit umbra
corporis, e regione eadem nos usque secuta.

[327] Moreover any vivid brightness often bums the eyes, because it contains many seeds of fire which make a way in and beget pain in the eyes.

Again whatever the jaundiced look at becomes a greenish-yellow, because many seeds of greenish-yellow stream from their body and meet the idols of things, and many too are mixed up in their eyes, and these by their infection thing all things with fallow hues.

Again we see out of the dark things which are in the light for this reason: when the black air of darkness being the nearer has first entered and taken possession of the open eyes, the bright white air follows straightway after and cleanses them so to say and dispels the black shadows of the other air; for this is a great deal more nimble, a great deal more subtle and more efficacious.

As soon as it has filled with light and opened up the passages of the eyes which the black air had before blocked up, forthwith the idols of things which are situated in the light follow and excite them so that we see.

This we cannot do conversely in the dark out of the light, because the grosser air of darkness follows behind and quite fills all the openings and blocks up the passages of the eyes, not letting the idols of any things at all be thrown into the eyes to move them.

Again when we descry far off the square towers of a town, they often appear to be round for this reason: all the angles are seen from a distance to look obtuse, or rather are not seen at all, and their blow is lost and their stroke never makes its way to our sight, because while the idols are borne on through

much air, the air by repeated collisions blunts the stroke perforce.

When in this way all the angles have together eluded the sense, the stone structures are rounded off as if by the lathe; yet they do not look like the things which are close before us and really round, but somewhat resembling them as in shadowy outline.

Our shadow likewise seems to move in the sunshine and to follow our steps and mimic our action; if you think forsooth that air deprived of life can step, imitating the motions and the actions of men; for that which we are wont to term shadow can be nothing but air devoid of light.

Sure enough, because the earth in certain spots successively is deprived of light wherever we intercept it in moving about, while that part of it which we have quitted is filled with light, therefore that which was the shadow of our body, seems to have always followed us unchanged in a direct line with us.

375 semper enim nova se radiorum lumina fundunt
primaque dispereunt, quasi in ignem lana trahatur.
propterea facile et spoliatur lumine terra
et repletur item nigrasque sibi abluit umbras.
Nec tamen hic oculos falli concedimus hilum.

380 nam quo cumque loco sit lux atque umbra tueri
illorum est; eadem vero sint lumina necne,
umbraque quae fuit hic eadem nunc transeat illuc,
an potius fiat paulo quod diximus ante,
hoc animi demum ratio discernere debet,

385 nec possunt oculi naturam noscere rerum.
proinde animi vitium hoc oculis adfingere noli.
Qua vehimur navi, fertur, cum stare videtur;
quae manet in statione, ea praeter creditur ire.
et fugere ad puppim colles campique videntur,

390 quos agimus praeter navem velisque volamus.
Sidera cessare aetheriis adfixa cavernis
cuncta videntur, et adsiduo sunt omnia motu,
quandoquidem longos obitus exorta revisunt,
cum permensa suo sunt caelum corpore claro.

395 solque pari ratione manere et luna videtur
in statione, ea quae ferri res indicat ipsa.
Exstantisque procul medio de gurgite montis
classibus inter quos liber patet exitus ingens,
insula coniunctis tamen ex his una videtur.

400 atria versari et circum cursare columnae
usque adeo fit uti pueris videantur, ubi ipsi
desierunt verti, vix ut iam credere possint
non supra sese ruere omnia tecta minari.
Iamque rubrum tremulis iubar ignibus erigere alte

405 cum coepit natura supraque extollere montes,
quos tibi tum supra sol montis esse videtur
comminus ipse suo contingens fervidus igni,
vix absunt nobis missus bis mille sagittae,
vix etiam cursus quingentos saepe veruti;
410 inter eos solemque iacent immania ponti
aequora substrata aetheriis ingentibus oris,
interiectaque sunt terrarum milia multa,
quae variae retinent gentes et saecula ferarum.

[374] For new rays of light ever pour in and the old are lost, just as if wool were drawn into the fire.

Therefore the earth is readily stripped of light, and again filled, and cleanses itself from black shadows.

And yet in all this we do not admit that the eyes are cheated one whit, for it is their province to observe in what spot soever light and shade are; but whether the lights are still the same or not, and whether it is the same shadow which was in this spot that is now passing to that, or whether what we said a little before is not rather the fact, this the reason of the mind, and only it, has to determine; nor can the eyes know the nature of things.

Do not then fasten upon the eyes this frailty of the mind.

The ship in which we are sailing moves on while seeming to stand still; that one which remains at its moorings is believed to be passing by.

The hills and fields seem to be dropping astern, past which we are driving our ship and flying under sail.

The stars all seem to be at rest fast fixed to the ethereal vaults, and yet are all in constant motion, since they rise and then go back to their far-off places of setting after they have traversed the length of heaven with their bright bodies.

In like manner sun and moon seem to stay in one place, bodies which simple fact proves are carried on.

And though between mountains rising up afar off from amid the waters there opens out for fleets a free passage of wide extent, yet a single island seems to be formed out of them united into one.

When children have stopped turning round themselves, the halls appear to them to whirl about and the pillars to course round to such a degree, that they can scarce believe that the whole roof is not threatening to tumble down upon them.

Again when nature begins to raise on high the sun's beam ruddy with bickering fires and to lift it up above the mountains, those hills above which the sun then seems to you to be, as blazing close at hand he dyes them with his own fire, are distant from us scarce two thousand arrow-flights, yea often scarce five hundred casts of a javelin; and yet between them and the sun lie immense levels of sea, spread out below the huge borders of ether, and many

thousands of lands are between, held by divers peoples and races of wild beasts.

At coniectus aquae digitum non altior unum,
415 qui lapides inter sistit per strata viarum,
despectum praebet sub terras inpete tanto,
a terris quantum caeli patet altus hiatus,
nubila despicere et caelum ut videre videre,
corpora mirande sub terras abdita caelo.

420 Denique ubi in medio nobis ecus acer obhaesit
flumine et in rapidas amnis despeximus undas,
stantis equi corpus transversum ferre videtur
vis et in adversum flumen contrudere raptim,
et quo cumque oculos traiecimus omnia ferri
425 et fluere adsimili nobis ratione videntur.

Porticus aequali quamvis est denique ductu
stansque in perpetuum paribus suffulta columnis,
longa tamen parte ab summa cum tota videtur,
paulatim trahit angusti fastigia coni,

430 tecta solo iungens atque omnia dextera laevis
donec in obscurum coni conduxit acumen.
In pelago nautis ex undis ortus in undis
sol fit uti videatur obire et condere lumen;
quippe ubi nil aliud nisi aquam caelumque tuentur;

435 ne leviter credas labefactari undique sensus.
at maris ignaris in portu clauda videntur
navigia aplustris fractis obnitier undis.
nam quae cumque supra rorem salis edita pars est
remorum, recta est, et recta superne gubernata;

440 quae demersa liquore obeunt, refracta videntur
omnia converti sursumque supina reverti
et reflexa prope in summo fluitare liquore.

Raraque per caelum cum venti nubila portant
tempore nocturno, tum splendida signa videntur

445 labier adversum nimbos atque ire superne
longe aliam in partem ac vera ratione feruntur
At si forte oculo manus uni subdita supter
pressit eum, quodam sensu fit uti videantur
omnia quae tuimur fieri tum bina tuendo,

450 bina lucernarum florentia lumina flammis
binaque per totas aedis geminare supellex
et duplicis hominum facies et corpora bina.
Denique cum suavi devinxit membra sopore
sognus et in summa corpus iacet omne quiete,

455 tum vigilare tamen nobis et membra movere
nostra videmur, et in noctis caligine caeca

[414] Then a puddle of water not more than a finger-breadth deep, which stands between the stones in the streets, offers a prospect beneath the earth of a reach as vast, as that with which the high yawning maw of heaven opens out above the earth; so that you seem to discern clouds and see the bodies of birds far withdrawn into that wondrous sky beneath the earth.

Again when our stout horse has stuck in the middle of a river and we have looked down on the swift waters of the stream, some force seems to carry athwart the current the body of the horse which is standing still and to force it rapidly up the stream; and to whatever point we cast our eyes about, all things seem to be carried on and to be flowing in the same way as we are.

Again although a portico runs in parallel lines from one end to the other and stands supported by equal columns along its whole extent, yet when, from the top of it, it is seen in its entire length, it gradually forms the contracted top of a narrowing cone, until uniting roof with floor and all the right side with the left it has brought them together into the vanishing point of a cone.

To sailors on the sea the sun appears to rise out of the waters and in the waters to set and bury his light; just because they behold nothing but water and sky; that you may not lightly suppose the credit of the senses to be shaken on all hands.

Then to people unacquainted with the sea ships in harbor seem to be all askew and with poop fittings broken to be pressing up against the water.

For whatever part of the oars is raised above the saltwater is straight, and the rudders in their upper half are straight: the parts which are sunk below the water-level appear to be broken and bent round and to slope up and turn back towards the surface and to be so much twisted back as well nigh to float on the top of the water.

And when the winds carry the thinly scattered clouds across heaven in the night time, then do the glittering signs appear to glide athwart the rack and to be travelling on high in a direction quite different to their real course.

Then if our hand chance to be placed beneath one eye and press it below, through a certain sensation all things which we look at appear then to become double as we look; the light of lamps brilliant with flames to be double, double too the furniture through the whole house, double men's faces and men's bodies.

Again when sleep has chained down our limbs in sweet slumber and the whole body is sunk in profound repose, yet then we seem to ourselves to be awake and to be moving our limbs, and mid the thick darkness of night we think we see the sun and the daylight;

cernere censemus solem lumenque diurnum,
conclusoque loco caelum mare flumina montis
mutare et campos pedibus transire videmur,

460 et sonitus audire, severa silentia noctis
 undique cum constant, et reddere dicta tacentes.
 Cetera de genere hoc mirande multa videmus,
 quae violare fidem quasi sensibus omnia quaerunt,
 ne quiquam, quoniam pars horum maxima fallit
 465 propter opinatus animi, quos addimus ipsi,
 pro visis ut sint quae non sunt sensibus visa;
 nam nihil aegrius est quam res discernere apertas
 ab dubiis, animus quas ab se protinus addit.
 Denique nil sciri si quis putat, id quoque nescit
 470 an sciri possit, quoniam nil scire fatetur.
 hunc igitur contra minuam contendere causam,
 qui capite ipse suo in statuit vestigia sese.
 et tamen hoc quoque uti concedam scire, at id ipsum
 quaeram, cum in rebus veri nil viderit ante,
 475 unde sciat quid sit scire et nescire vicissim,
 notitiam veri quae res falsique crearit
 et dubium certo quae res differre probarit.
 invenies primis ab sensibus esse creatam
 notitiam veri neque sensus posse refelli.
 480 nam maiore fide debet reperiri illud,
 sponte sua veris quod possit vincere falsa.
 quid maiore fide porro quam sensus haberi
 debet? an ab sensu falso ratio orta valebit
 dicere eos contra, quae tota ab sensibus orta est?
 485 qui nisi sunt veri, ratio quoque falsa fit omnis.
 An poterunt oculos aures reprehendere, an aures
 tactus? an hunc porro tactum sapor arguet oris,
 an confutabunt nares oculive revincent?
 non, ut opinor, ita est. nam seorsum cuique potestas
 490 divisast, sua vis cuique, ideoque necesse est
 et quod molle sit et gelidum fervensve videre
 et seorsum varios rerum sentire colores
 et quae cumque coloribus sint coniuncta necessest.
 seorsus item sapor oris habet vim, seorsus odores
 495 nascuntur, seorsus sonitus. ideoque necesse est
 non possint alios alii convincere sensus.

[457] and though in a confined room, we seem to be passing to new climates
 seas rivers and mountains and to be crossing plains on foot and to hear noises,
 though the austere silence of night prevails all round, and to be uttering
 speech though quite silent.

Many are the other marvels of this sort we see, which all seek to shake as it
 were the credit of the senses: quite in vain, since the greatest part of these

cases cheats us on account of the mental suppositions which we add of ourselves, taking those things as seen which have not been seen by the senses.

For nothing is harder than to separate manifest facts from doubtful which straightway the mind adds on of itself.

Again if a man believe that nothing is known, he knows not whether this even can be known, since he admits he knows nothing.

I will therefore decline to argue the case against him who places himself with head where his feet should be.

And yet granting that he knows this, I would still put this question, since he has never yet seen any truth in things, whence he knows what knowing and not knowing severally are, and what it is that has produced the knowledge of the true and the false and what has proved the doubtful to differ from the certain.

You will find that from the senses first has proceeded the knowledge of the true and the false and that the senses cannot be refuted.

For that which is of itself to be able to refute things false by true things must from the nature of the case be proved to have the higher certainty.

Well then, what must fairly be accounted of higher certainty than sense?

Shall reason founded on false sense be able to contradict them, wholly founded as it is on the senses?

And if they are not true, then all reason as well is rendered false.

Or shall the ears be able to take the eyes to task, or the touch the ears? Again shall the taste call in question this touch, or the nostrils refute or the eyes controvert it? Not so, I guess; for each apart has its own distinct office, each its own power; and therefore we must perceive what is soft and cold or hot by one distinct faculty, by another perceive the different colors of things and thus see all objects which are conjoined with color.

Taste too has its faculty apart; smells spring from one source, sounds from another.

nec porro poterunt ipsi reprehendere sese,
aequa fides quoniam debebit semper haberi.
proinde quod in quoquest his visum tempore, verumst.

500 Et si non poterit ratio dissolvere causam,
cur ea quae fuerint iuxtim quadrata, procul sint
visa rutunda, tamen praestat rationis egentem
reddere mendose causas utriusque figurae,
quam manibus manifesta suis emittere quoquam
505 et violare fidem primam et convellere tota
fundamenta quibus nixatur vita salusque.

non modo enim ratio ruat omnis, vita quoque ipsa
concidat extemplo, nisi credere sensibus ausis
praecipitisque locos vitare et cetera quae sint
510 in genere hoc fugienda, sequi contraria quae sint.

illa tibi est igitur verborum copia cassa
omnis, quae contra sensus instructa paratast.
Denique ut in fabrica, si pravast regula prima,
normaque si fallax rectis regionibus exit,
515 et libella aliqua si ex parti claudicat hilum,
omnia mendose fieri atque obstipa necessu est
prava cubantia prona supina atque absona tecta,
iam ruere ut quaedam videantur velle, ruantque
prodita iudiciis fallacibus omnia primis,
520 sic igitur ratio tibi rerum prava necessest
falsaque sit, falsis quae cumque ab sensibus ortast.
Nunc alii sensus quo pacto quisque suam rem
sentiat, haud quaquam ratio scruposa relicta est.
Principio auditur sonus et vox omnis, in auris
525 insinuata suo pepulere ubi corpore sensum.
corpoream quoque enim vocem constare fatendumst
et sonitum, quoniam possunt impellere sensus.
Praeterea radit vox fauces saepe facitque
asperiora foras gradiens arteria clamor,
530 quippe per angustum turba maiore coorta
ire foras ubi coeperunt primordia vocum.
scilicet expletis quoque ianua raditur oris.
haud igitur dubiumst quin voces verbaque constant
corporeis e principiis, ut laedere possint.
535 nec te fallit item quid corporis auferat et quid
detrahat ex hominum nervis ac viribus ipsis
perpetuus sermo nigrae noctis ad umbram
aurorae perductus ab exoriente nitore,
praesertim si cum summost clamore profusus.

[496] It must follow therefore that any one sense cannot confute any other.

No nor can any sense take itself to task, since equal credit must be assigned to it at all times.

What therefore has at any time appeared true to each sense, is true.

And if reason shall be unable to explain away the cause why things which close at hand were square, at a distance looked round, it yet is better, if you are at a loss for the reason, to state erroneously the causes of each shape than to let slip from your grasp on any side things manifest and ruin the groundwork of belief and wrench up all the foundations on which rest life and existence.

For not only would all reason give way, life itself would at once fall to the ground, unless you choose to trust the senses and shun precipices and all things else of this sort that are to be avoided, and to pursue the opposite things.

All that host of words then be sure is quite unmeaning which has been drawn out in array against the senses.

Once more, as in a building, if the rule first applied is wry, and the square is untrue and swerves from its straight lines, and if there is the slightest hitch in any part of the level, all the construction must be faulty, all must be wry, crooked, sloping, leaning forwards, leaning backwards, without symmetry, so that some parts seem ready to fall, others do fall, ruined all by the first erroneous measurements; so too all reason of things must needs prove to you distorted and false, which is founded on false senses.

And now to explain in what way the other senses do each perceive their several objects, is the nowise arduous task which is still left.

In the first place, all sound and voice is heard when they have made their way into the ears and have struck with their body the sense of hearing.

For voice too and sound you must admit to be bodily, since they are able to act upon the senses.

Again, voice often abrades the throat, and shouting in passing forth makes the windpipe more rough: when to wit the first-beginnings of voices have risen up in larger mass and commenced to pass abroad through their strait passage, you are to know the door of the mouth now crammed itself is abraded.

There is no doubt then that voices and words consist of bodily first beginnings, with the power to hurt; nor can you fail to know how much of body is taken away and how much is withdrawn from men's very sinews and strength by a speech continued without interruption from the dawning brightness of morning to the shadow of black night, above all if it has been poured forth with much loud shouting.

540 ergo corpoream vocem constare necessest,
multa loquens quoniam amittit de corpore partem.

Asperitas autem vocis fit ab asperitate
principiorum et item levor levore creatur;
nec simili penetrant auris primordia forma,
545 cum tuba depresso graviter sub murmure mugit
et reboat raucum retro cita barbita bombum,
et iam Dauliades natae hortis ex Heliconis
cum liquidam tollunt lugubri voce querellam.

Hasce igitur penitus voces cum corpore nostro
550 exprimimus rectoque foras emittimus ore,
mobilis articulatur nervorum daedala lingua,
formaturaque laborum pro parte figurat.
hoc ubi non longum spatiumst unde illa profecta
perveniat vox quaeque, necessest verba quoque ipsa
555 plane exaudiri discernique articulatum;
servat enim formaturam servatque figuram.

at si inter positum spatium sit longius aequo,
aëra per multum confundi verba necessest
et conturbari vocem, dum transvolat auras.
560 ergo fit, sonitum ut possis sentire neque illam
internoscere, verborum sententia quae sit;
usque adeo confusa venit vox inque pedita.
Praeterea verbum saepe unum perciet auris
omnibus in populo missum praeconis ab ore.
565 in multas igitur voces vox una repente
diffugit, in privas quoniam se dividit auris
obsignans formam verbis clarumque sonorem.
at quae pars vocum non auris incidit ipsas,
praeter lata perit frustra diffusa per auras.
570 pars solidis adlisa locis reiecta sonorem
reddit et inter dum frustratur imagine verbi.
Quae bene cum videas, rationem reddere possis
tute tibi atque aliis, quo pacto per loca sola
saxa paris formas verborum ex ordine reddant.
575 palantis comites com montis inter opacos
quaerimus et magna dispersos voce ciemus.
sex etiam aut septem loca vidi reddere vocis,
unam cum iaceres: ita colles collibus ipsi
verba repulsantes iterabant dicta referri.

[540] Voice therefore must be bodily, since a man by much speaking loses a portion from his body.

Next roughness of voice comes from roughness of first-beginnings, as smoothness is produced from smoothness.

Nor are the first-beginnings of like shape which pierce the ears in these two cases: when the trumpet brays dully in deep low tones, the barbarian country roused echoing back the hoarse hollow sound, and when swans from the headstrong torrents of Helicon raise their clear-toned dirge with plaintive voice.

When therefore we force these voices forth from the depths of our body and discharge them straight out at the mouth, the pliant tongue, deft fashioner of words, gives them articulate utterance and the structure of the lips does its part in shaping them.

Therefore when the distance is not long between the point from which each several voice has started and that at which it arrives, the very words too must be plainly heard and distinguished syllable by syllable; for each voice retains its structure and retains its shape.

But if the space between be more than is suitable, the words must be huddled together in passing through much air and the voice be disorganized in its flight through the same.

Therefore it is that you can hear a sound, yet cannot distinguish what the meaning of the words is: so huddled and hampered is the voice when it comes.

Again a single word often stirs the ears of a whole assembly of people, when uttered by the crier's mouth.

One voice therefore in a moment starts asunder into many voices, since it distributes itself separately into all the ears, stamping upon them the form and distinct sound of the word.

But such of the voices as do not fall directly on the ears, are carried past and lost, fruitlessly dispersed in air: some striking upon solid spots are thrown back and give back a sound and sometimes mock by an echo of the word.

When you fully perceive all this, you may explain to yourself and others how it is that in lonely spots rocks give back in regular succession forms of words like to those sent forth, as we seek our comrades straying about among the darkened hills and with loud voice call upon them scattered abroad.

I have seen places give back as many as six or seven voices, when you sent forth one: in such wise did the very hills dash back on hills and repeat the words thus trained to come back.

580 haec loca capripedes Satyros Nymphasque tenere

finitimi fingunt et Faunos esse locuntur,

quorum noctivago strepitu ludoque iocanti

adfirmant volgo taciturna silentia rumpi

chordarumque sonos fieri dulcisque querellas,

585 tibia quas fundit digitis pulsata canentum,

et genus agriculum late sentiscere, quom Pan

pineae semiferi capitis velamina quassans

unco saepe labro calamos percurrit hiantis,

fistula silvestrem ne cesset fundere musam.

590 cetera de genere hoc monstra ac portenta loquuntur,

ne loca deserta ab divis quoque forte putentur

sola tenere. ideo iactant miracula dictis

aut aliqua ratione alia ducuntur, ut omne

humanum genus est avidum nimis auricularum.

595 Quod super est, non est mirandum qua ratione,

per loca quae nequeunt oculi res cernere apertas,

haec loca per voces veniant aurisque lacessant,

conloquium clausis foribus quoque saepe videmus;

ni mirum quia vox per flexa foramina rerum

600 incolumis transire potest, simulacra renutant;

perscinduntur enim, nisi recta foramina tranant,

qualia sunt vitrei, species qua travolat omnis.

praeterea partis in cunctas dividitur vox,

ex aliis aliae quoniam gignuntur, ubi una

605 dissuluit semel in multas exorta, quasi ignis
saepe solet scintilla suos se spargere in ignis.
ergo replentur loca vocibus abdita retro,
omnia quae circum fervunt sonituque cientur.
at simulacra viis directis omnia tendunt,
610 ut sunt missa semel; qua propter cernere nemo
saepe supra potis est, at voces accipere extra.
et tamen ipsa quoque haec, dum transit clausa domorum
vox optunditur atque auris confusa penetrat
et sonitum potius quam verba audire videmur.
615 Hoc, qui sentimus sucum, lingua atque palatum
plusculum habent in se rationis, plus operai.
principio sucum sentimus in ore, cibum cum
mandendo exprimimus, ceu plenam spongiam aquai
siquis forte manu premere ac siccare coëpit.

[579] These spots the people round fancy that the goat-footed satyrs and nymphs inhabit, and tell that they are the fauns by whose night-pervading noise and sportive play as they declare the still silence is broken and sounds produced of stringed instruments and sweet plaintive melodies, such as the pipe pours forth when beaten by the fingers of the players; the country-people hearing far and wide, what time Pan nodding the piny covering of his head half a beast's oft runs over the gaping reeds with curved lip, making the pipe without ceasing to pour forth its woodland song.

Other such like prodigies and marvels they tell of, that they may not haply bethought to inhabit lonely places, abandoned even by the gods.

On this account they vaunt such wonders in their stories or are led on by some other reason; inasmuch as the whole race of man is all too greedy after listening ears.

To proceed, you need not wonder how it is that through places, through which the eyes cannot see plain things, voices come and strike the ears.

We often see a conversation go on even through closed doors, sure enough because the voice can pass uninjured through the winding openings of things, while idols refuse to pass: they are torn to shreds, if the openings through which they glide are not straight, like those of glass, through which every image passes.

Again, a voice distributes itself in all directions, since voices are begotten one out of another, when a single voice has once gone forth and sprung into many, as a spark of fire is often wont to distribute itself into its constituent fires.

Therefore places are filled with voices which though far withdrawn out of view yet are all in commotion and stirred by sound.

But idols all proceed in straight courses as soon as they have been discharged; and therefore you can never see beyond a wall, but you may hear

voices outside it.

And yet this very voice even in passing through the walls of houses is blunted and enters the ears in a huddled state, and we seem to hear the sound rather than the actual words.

The tongue and palate whereby we perceive flavor, have not in them anything that calls for longer explanation or offers more difficulty.

In the first place we perceive flavor in the mouth when we press it out in chewing our food, in the same way as when one haply begins to squeeze with his hand and dry a sponge full of water.

620 inde quod exprimimus per caulas omne palati
diditur et rariae per flexa foramina linguae,
hoc ubi levia sunt manantis corpora suci,
suaviter attingunt et suaviter omnia tractant
umida linguae circum sudantia templa;

625 at contra pungunt sensum lacerantque coorta,
quanto quaeque magis sunt asperitate repleta.
deinde voluptas est e suco fine palati;
cum vero deorsum per fauces praecipitavit,
nulla voluptas est, dum diditur omnis in artus;

630 nec refert quicquam quo victu corpus alatur,
dum modo quod capias concoctum didere possis
artubus et stomachi tumidum servare tenorem.

Nunc aliis alius qui sit cibus ut videamus,
expediam, quareve, aliis quod triste et amarumst,

635 hoc tamen esse aliis possit perdulce videri,
tantaque in his rebus distantia differitasque est,
ut quod aliis cibus est aliis fuit acre venenum;
est itaque ut serpens, hominis quae tacta salivis
disperit ac sese mandendo conficit ipsa.

640 praeterea nobis veratrum est acre venenum,
at capris adipos et cocturnicibus auget.

id quibus ut fiat rebus cognoscere possis,
principio meminisse decet quae diximus ante,
semina multimodis in rebus mixta teneri.

645 porro omnes quae cumque cibum capiunt animantes,
ut sunt dissimiles extrinsecus et generatim
extima membrorum circumcaesura coercet,
proinde et seminibus constant variantque figura.

semina cum porro distent, differre necessest

650 intervalla viasque, foramina quae perhibemus,
omnibus in membris et in ore ipsoque palato.

esse minora igitur quaedam maioraque debent,
esse triquetra aliis, aliis quadrata necessest,

multa rutunda, modis multis multangula quaedam.

655 namque figurarum ratio ut motusque reposcunt,
proinde foraminibus debent differe figurae
et variare viae proinde ac textura coërcet.

[619] Next the whole of what we press out distributes itself through the cavities of the palate and the intricate openings of the porous tongue.

Therefore when the bodies of oozing flavor are smooth, they pleasantly touch and pleasantly feel all the parts if about the moist exuding quarters of the palate.

But on the other hand, when they rise in a mass they puncture and tear the sense according to the degree in which they are pervaded by roughness.

Next the pleasure from the flavor reaches as far as the palate; when however it has passed down through the throat, there is no pleasure while it is all distributing itself into the frame.

And it makes no matter what the food is with which the body is nurtured, provided you can digest what you take and transmit it into the frame and keep the stomach in an equable condition of moistness.

I will now explain how it is that different food is pleasant and nutritious for different creatures; also why that which to some is nauseous and bitter, may yet to others seem passing sweet; and why in these matters the difference and discrepancy is so great that what to one man is food, to another is rank poison; and there is actually a serpent which on being touched by a man's spittle wastes away and destroys itself by gnawing its body.

Again hellebore for us is rank poison, but helps to fatten goats and quails.

That you may know how this comes to pass, first of all you must remember what we have said before, that the seeds which are contained in things are mixed up in manifold ways.

Again all living creatures soever which take food, even as they are unlike on the outside, and, differing in each after its kind, an exterior contour of limbs bounds them, so likewise are they formed of seeds of varying shape.

Again since the seeds differ, there must be a discrepancy in the spaces between and the passages, which we name openings, in all the limbs and mouth and palate as well.

Some openings therefore must be smaller, some larger; some things must have them three-cornered, others square; many must be round, some many-angled after many fashions.

For as the relation between the shapes of seeds and their motions require, the openings also must differ accordingly in their shapes; and the passages must vary, as varies the texture formed by the seeds which bound them.

hoc ubi quod suave est aliis aliis fit amarum,
illi, cui suave est, levissima corpora debent
660 contractabiliter caulas intrare palati,
at contra quibus est eadem res intus acerba,

aspera ni mirum penetrant hamataque fauces.
nunc facile est ex his rebus cognoscere quaeque.
quippe ubi cui febris bili superante coorta est
665 aut alia ratione aliquast vis excita morbi,
perturbatur ibi iam totum corpus et omnes
commutantur ibi positurae principiorum;
fit prius ad sensum ut quae corpora conveniebant
nunc non conveniant, et cetera sint magis apta,
670 quae penetrata queunt sensum progignere acerbum;
utraque enim sunt in mellis commixta sapore;
id quod iam supera tibi saepe ostendimus ante.
Nunc age, quo pacto naris adiectus odoris
tangat agam. primum res multas esse necessest
675 unde fluens volvat varius se fluctus odorum,
et fluere et mitti volgo spargique putandumst;
verum aliis alius magis est animantibus aptus,
dissimilis propter formas. ideoque per auras
mellis apes quamvis longe ducuntur odore,
680 volturiique cadaveribus; tum fissa ferarum
ungula quo tulerit gressum promissa canum vis
ducit, et humanum longe praesentit odorem
Romulidarum arcis servator, candidus anser.
sic aliis alius nidor datus ad sua quemque
685 pabula ducit et a taetro resiliire veneno
cogit, eoque modo servantur saecula ferarum.
Hic odor ipse igitur, naris qui cumque lacessit,
est alio ut possit permitti longius alter;
sed tamen haud quisquam tam longe fertur eorum
690 quam sonitus, quam vox, mitto iam dicere quam res
quae feriunt oculorum acies visumque lacessunt.
errabundus enim tarde venit ac perit ante
paulatim facilis distractus in aëris auras;
ex alto primum quia vix emittitur ex re;
695 nam penitus fluere atque recedere rebus odores
significat quod fracta magis redolere videntur
omnia, quod contrita, quod igni conlabefacta.

[658] For this reason when that which is sweet to some becomes bitter to others, for that creature to whom it is sweet the smoothest bodies must enter the cavities of the palate with power to feel them all over; but on the other hand in the case of those to whom the same thing is bitter within, rough and barbed seeds sure enough pass down the throat.

It is easy now from these principles to understand all particular cases: thus when a fever has attacked any one from too great a flow of bile, or a violent

disease has been excited in any other way, thereupon the whole body is disordered and all the arrangements of particles then and there changed; the consequence of which is that the bodies which before were suited to excite sensation, suit no more; and those fit it better, which are able to make their way in and beget a bitter sense.

Both kinds for instance are mixed up in the flavor of honey: a point we have often proved before.

Now mark me, and I will discuss the way in which the contact of smell affects the nostrils: and first there must be many things from which a varied flow of smells streams and rolls on; and we must suppose that they thus stream and discharge and disperse themselves among all things alike; but one smell fits itself better to one creature, another to another on account of their unlike shapes; and therefore bees are drawn on by the smell of honey through the air to a very great distance, and so are vultures by carcasses.

Also the onward-reaching power of scent in dogs leads them whithersoever the cloven hoof of wild beasts has carried them in their course; and the smell of man is felt far away by the savior of the Romans' citadel, the bright white goose.

Thus different scents assigned to different creatures led each to its appropriate food and constrain them to recoil from nauseous poison, and in this way the races of beasts are preserved.

Of all these different smells then which strike the nostrils one may reach to a much greater distance than another; though none of them is carried so far as sound, as voice, to say nothing of things which strike the eyesight and provoke vision.

For in its mazy course each comes slowly on and is sooner lost, being gradually dispersed into the readily receiving expanse of air; first because coming out of its depths it with difficulty discharges itself from the thing: for the fact that all things are found to have a stronger smell when crushed, when pounded, when broken up by fire, shows that odors stream and withdraw from the inner parts of things:

deinde videre licet maioribus esse creatum
principiis quam vox, quoniam per saxea saepta
700 non penetrat, qua vox volgo sonitusque feruntur.
quare etiam quod olet non tam facile esse videbis
investigare in qua sit regione locatum;
refrigescit enim cunctando plaga per auras
nec calida ad sensum decurrunt nuntia rerum.
705 errant saepe canes itaque et vestigia quaerunt.
Nec tamen hoc solis in odoribus atque saporum
in generest, sed item species rerum atque colores
non ita conveniunt ad sensus omnibus omnes,
ut non sint aliis quaedam magis acria visu.

710 quin etiam gallum noctem explaudentibus alis
 auroram clara consuetum voce vocare,
 noenu queunt rapidi contra constare leones
 inque tueri: ita continuo meminere fugai.
 ni mirum quia sunt gallorum in corpore quaedam
 715 semina, quae cum sunt oculis inmissa leonum,
 pupillas interfodiunt acremque dolorem
 praebent, ut nequeant contra durare feroces,
 cum tamen haec nostras acies nil laedere possint,
 aut quia non penetrant aut quod penetrantibus illis
 720 exitus ex oculis liber datur, in remorando
 laedere ne possint ex ulla lumina parte.
 Nunc age, quae moveant animum res accipe, et unde
 quae veniunt veniant in mentem percipe paucis.
 principio hoc dico, rerum simulacra vagari
 725 multa modis multis in cunctas undique partis
 tenvia, quae facile inter se iunguntur in auris,
 obvia cum veniunt, ut aranea bratteeque auri.
 quippe etenim multo magis haec sunt tenvia textu
 quam quae percipiunt oculos visumque lacessunt,
 730 corporis haec quoniam penetrant per rara cientque
 tenvem animi naturam intus sensumque lacessunt.
 Centauros itaque et Scyllarum membra videmus
 Cerbereasque canum facies simulacraque eorum
 quorum morte obita tellus amplectitur ossa;
 735 omnigenus quoniam passim simulacra feruntur,
 partim sponte sua quae fiunt aëre in ipso,
 partim quae variis ab rebus cumque recedunt
 et quae confiunt ex horum facta figuris.

[698] next you may see that smell is formed of larger first-beginnings than voice, since it does not pass through stone walls, through which voice and sound are borne without fail.

For this reason also you will find that it is not so easy to trace out in what quarter a thing which smells is situated; for the blow cools down as it loiters through the air, and the courier particles of things are no longer hot when they finish their race to sense; for which reason dogs are often at fault and lose the scent.

But what I have said is not found in smells and in the class of flavors only, but also the forms and colors of things are not all so well suited to the senses of all, but that some will be more distressing to the sight than others.

Moreover ravenous lions cannot face and bear to gaze upon a cock with flapping wings putting night to rout and wont to summon morning with shrill voice: in such wise they at once bethink themselves of flight, because sure

enough in the body of cocks are certain seeds, and these, when they have been discharged into the eyes of lions, bore into the pupils and cause such sharp pain that courageous though they be, they cannot continue to face them; while at the same time these things cannot hurt at all our sight, either because they do not enter in or because the moment they enter a free passage out of the eyes is granted them, so that they cannot by staying behind hurt the eyes in any part!

Now mark, and hear what things move the mind, and learn in a few words whence the things which come into it do come.

I say first of all, that idols of things wander about many in number in many ways in all directions round, extremely thin; and these when they meet, readily unite, like a cobweb or piece of gold-leaf.

For these idols are far thinner in texture than those which take possession of the eyes and provoke vision; since these enter in through the porous parts of the body and stir the fine nature of the mind within and provoke sensation.

Therefore we see Centaurs and limbs of Scyllas and Cerberus-like faces of dogs and idols of those who are dead, whose bones earth holds in its embrace; since idols of every kind are everywhere borne about, partly those which are spontaneously produced within the air, partly all those which withdraw from various things and those which are formed by compounding the shapes of these.

nam certe ex vivo Centauri non fit imago,
740 nulla fuit quoniam talis natura animata;
verum ubi equi atque hominis casu convenit imago,
haerescit facile extemplo, quod diximus ante,
propter subtilem naturam et tenvia texta.
cetera de genere hoc eadem ratione creantur.
745 quae cum mobiliter summa levitate feruntur,
ut prius ostendi, facile uno commovet ictu
quae libet una animum nobis subtilis imago;
tensis enim mens est et mire mobilis ipsa.
haec fieri ut memoro, facile hinc cognoscere possis.
750 quatinus hoc simile est illi, quod mente videmus
atque oculis, simili fieri ratione necessest.
Nunc igitur docui quoniam me forte leonum
cernere per simulacra, oculos quae cumque lacesunt,
scire licet mentem simili ratione moveri
755 per simulacra leonum et cetera quae videt aequae
nec minus atque oculi, nisi quod mage tenvia cernit.
nec ratione alia, cum somnus membra profudit,
mens animi vigilat, nisi quod simulacra lacesunt
haec eadem nostros animos quae cum vigilamus,
760 usque adeo, certe ut videamur cernere eum quem

relucta vita iam mors et terra potitast.
hoc ideo fieri cogit natura, quod omnes
corporis affecti sensus per membra quiescunt
nec possunt falsum veris convincere rebus.
765 praeterea meminisse iacet languetque sopore,
nec dissentit eum mortis letique potitum
iam pridem, quem mens vivom se cernere credit.
quod super est, non est mirum simulacra moveri
brachiaque in numerum iactare et cetera membra;
770 nam fit ut in somnis facere hoc videatur imago.
quippe, ubi prima perit alioque est altera nata
inde statu, prior hic gestum mutasse videtur.
scilicet id fieri celeri ratione putandumst:
tanta est mobilitas et rerum copia tanta
775 tantaque sensibili quovis est tempore in uno
copia particularum, ut possit suppeditare.
Multaque in his rebus quaeruntur multaque nobis
clarandumst, plane si res exponere avemus.

[739] For assuredly no image of Centaur is formed out of a live one, since no such nature of living creature ever existed; but when images of a horse and a man have by chance come together, they readily adhere at once, as we said before, on account of their fine nature and thin texture.

All other things of the kind are produced in like fashion.

And when these from extreme lightness are borne on with velocity, as I showed before, any one subtle composite image you like readily moves the mind by a single stroke; for the mind is fine and is itself wondrously nimble.

That all this is done as I relate you may easily learn from what follows.

So far as the one is like another, seeing with the mind and seeing with the eyes must be produced in a like way.

Well then since I have shown that I perceive for instance a lion by means of idols which provoke the eyes, you may be sure that the mind is moved in a like way, which by means of idols sees a lion or anything else just as well as the eyes, with this difference that it perceives much thinner idols.

And when sleep has prostrated the body, for no other reason does the mind's intelligence wake, except because the very same idols provoke our minds which provoke them when we are awake, and to such a degree that we seem without a doubt to perceive him whom life has left and death and earth gotten hold of.

This nature constrains to come to pass because all the senses of the body are then hampered and at rest throughout the limbs and cannot refute the unreal by real things.

Moreover memory is prostrate and relaxed in sleep and protests not that he has long been in the grasp of death and destruction whom the mind believes it

sees alive.

Furthermore it is not strange that idols move and throw about their arms and other limbs in regular measure: for sometimes in sleep an image is seen to do this: when the first to wit has gone and a second then been born in another posture, that former one seems to have altered its attitude.

This remember you must assume to take place with exceeding celerity: so great is the velocity, so great the store of things; so great in any one unit of time that sense can seize is the store of particles, out of which the supply may go on.

And here many questions present themselves and many points must be cleared up by us, if we desire to give a plain exposition of things.

quaeritur in primis quare, quod cuique libido
780 venerit, extemplo mens cogitet eius id ipsum.
anne voluntatem nostram simulacra tuentur
et simul ac volumus nobis occurrit imago,
si mare, si terram cordist, si denique caelum?
conventus hominum, pompam, convivia, pugnas,
785 omnia sub verbone creat natura paratque?
cum praesertim aliis eadem in regione locoque
longe dissimilis animus res cogitet omnis.
quid porro, in numerum procedere cum simulacra
cernimus in somnis et mollia membra movere,
790 mollia mobiliter cum alternis brachia mittunt
et repetunt oculis gestum pede convenienti?
scilicet arte madent simulacra et docta vagantur,
nocturno facere ut possint in tempore ludos.
an magis illud erit verum? quia tempore in uno,
795 cum sentimus, id est cum vox emittitur una,
tempora multa latent, ratio quae comperit esse,
propterea fit uti quovis in tempore quaeque
praesto sint simulacra locis in quisque parata.
tanta est mobilitas et rerum copia tanta.
800 hoc ubi prima perit alioque est altera nata
inde statu, prior hic gestum mutasse videtur.
et quia tenvia sunt, nisi quae contendit, acute
cernere non potis est animus; proinde omnia quae sunt
praeterea pereunt, nisi quae ex sese ipse paravit.
805 ipse parat sese porro speratque futurum
ut videat quod consequitur rem quamque: fit ergo.
nonne vides oculos etiam, cum tenvia quae sunt
praeterea pereunt, nisi quae ex se ipse paravit
cernere coeperunt, contendere se atque parare,
810 nec sine eo fieri posse ut cernamus acute?

et tamen in rebus quoque apertis noscere possis,
si non advertas animum, proinde esse quasi omni
tempore semotum fuerit longeque remotum.
cur igitur mirumst, animus si cetera perdit
185 praeter quam quibus est in rebus deditus ipse?
deinde adopinamur de signis maxima parvis
ac nos in fraudem induimus frustraminis ipsi.
Fit quoque ut inter dum non suppeditetur imago
eiusdem generis, sed femina quae fuit ante,
820 in manibus vir uti factus videatur adesse,
aut alia ex alia facies aetasque sequatur.
quod ne miremur sopor atque oblivia curant.
Illud in his rebus vitium vehementer Aïnesse
effugere errorem vitareque praemetuenter,
825 lumina ne facias oculorum clara creata,

[779] The first question is why, when the wish has occurred to any one to think of a thing, his mind on the instant thinks of that very thing.

Do idols observe our will, and so soon as we will does an image present itself to us, if sea, if earth, ay or heaven is what we wish?

Assemblies of men, a procession, feasts, battles, everything in short does nature at command produce and provide? And though to increase the marvel the mind of others in the same spot and room is thinking of things all quite different.

What again are we to say, when we see in sleep idols advance in measured tread and move their pliant limbs, when in nimble wise they put out each pliant arm in turn and represent to the eyes over and over again an action with foot that moves in time?

Idols to wit are imbued with art and move about well-trained, to be able in the night-time to exhibit such plays.

Or will this rather be the truth? Because in one unit of time, when we can perceive it by sense and while one single word is uttered, many latent times are contained which reason finds to exist, therefore in any time you please all the several idols are at hand ready prepared in each several place.

And because they are so thin, the mind can see distinctly only those which it strains itself to see; therefore all that there are besides are lost, save only those for which it has made itself ready.

Moreover, it makes itself ready and hopes to see that which follows upon each thing; therefore the result does follow.

Do you not see that the eyes also, when they essay to discern things which are thin and fine, strain themselves and make themselves ready, and without that we cannot see distinctly?

And yet you may observe even in things which are plain before us, that if you do not attend, it is just as if the thing were all the time away and far

distant?

What wonder then, if the mind loses all other things save those with which it is itself earnestly occupied?

Then too from small indications we draw the widest inferences and by our own fault entangle ourselves in the meshes of self-delusion.

Sometimes it happens too that an image of the same kind is not supplied, but what before was a woman, turns out in our hands to have changed into a man; or a different face and age succeed to the first.

But sleep and forgetfulness prevent us from feeling surprise at this.

And herein you should desire with all your might to shun the weakness, with a lively apprehension to avoid the mistake of supposing that the bright lights of the eyes were made in order that we might see;

prospicere ut possimus, et ut proferre queamus
proceros passus, ideo fastigia posse
surarum ac feminum pedibus fundata plicari,
bracchia tum porro validis ex apta lacertis
830 esse manusque datas utraque ex parte ministras,
ut facere ad vitam possemus quae foret usus.
cetera de genere hoc inter quae cumque pretantur,
omnia perversa praepostera sunt ratione,
nil ideo quoniam natumst in corpore ut uti
835 possemus, sed quod natumst id procreat usum.
nec fuit ante videre oculorum lumina nata,
nec dictis orare prius quam lingua creatast,
sed potius longe linguae praecessit origo
sermonem multoque creatae sunt prius aures
840 quam sonus est auditus, et omnia denique membra
ante fuere, ut opinor, eorum quam foret usus;
haud igitur potuere utendi crescere causa.
at contra conferre manu certamina pugnae
et lacerare artus foedareque membra cruore
845 ante fuit multo quam lucida tela volarent,
et volnus vitare prius natura coëgit
quam daret obiectum parmai laeva per artem.
scilicet et fessum corpus mandare quieti
multo antiquius est quam lecti mollia strata,
850 et sedare sitim prius est quam pocula natum.
haec igitur possunt utendi cognita causa
credier, ex usu quae sunt vitaeque reperta.
illa quidem seorsum sunt omnia, quae prius ipsa
nata dedere suae post notitiam utilitatis.
855 quo genere in primis sensus et membra videmus;
quare etiam atque etiam procul est ut credere possis

utilitatis ob officium potuisse creari.
Illud item non est mirandum, corporis ipsa
quod natura cibum quaerit cuiusque animantis.
860 quippe etenim fluere atque recedere corpora rebus
multa modis multis docui, sed plurima debent
ex animalibus; quae quia sunt exercita motu,
multa per os exhalantur, cum languida anhelant,
multaque per sudorem ex alto pressa feruntur.
865 his igitur rebus rarescit corpus et omnis
subruitur natura, dolor quam consequitur rem.

[826] and that the tapering ends of the shanks and hams are attached to the feet as a base in order to enable us to step out with long strides; or again that the forearms were slung to the stout upper arms and ministering hands given us on each side, that we might be able to discharge the needful duties of life.

Other explanations of like sort which men give, one and all put effect for cause through wrongheaded reasoning; since nothing was born in the body that we might use it, but that which is born begets itself a use: thus seeing did not exist before the eyes were born, nor the employment of speech ere the tongue was made; but rather the birth of the tongue was long anterior to language and the ears were made long before sound was heard, and all the limbs, I trow, existed before there was any employment for them: they could not therefore have grown for the purpose of being used.

But on the other hand, engaging in the strife of battle and mangling the body and staining the limbs with gore were in vogue long before glittering darts ever flew; and nature prompted to shun a wound or ever the left arm by the help of art held up before the person the defense of a shield.

Yes, and consigning the tired body to rest is much older than a soft-cushioned bed, and the slaking of thirst had birth before cups.

These things therefore which have been invented in accordance with the uses and wants of life, may well be believed to have been discovered for the purpose of being used.

Far otherwise is it with all those things which first were born, then afterwards made known the purposes to which they might be put; at the head of which class we see the senses and the limbs.

Wherefore again and again I repeat, it is quite impossible to believe that they could have been made for the duties which they discharge.

It ought likewise to cause no wonder that the nature of the body of each living creature absolutely requires food I have shown that bodies ebb away and withdraw from things, many in number in many ways; but most numerous must be those which withdraw from living things; for because these are tried by active motion, and many particles are pressed out from the depths of the frame and carried off by sweating, many breathed out through the mouth, when they pant from exhaustion, from such causes the body becomes rarefied

and the whole nature undermined;

propterea capitur cibus, ut suffulciat artus
et recreet vires inter datus, atque patentem
per membra ac venas ut amorem opturet edendi.

870 umor item discedit in omnia quae loca cumque
poscunt umorem; glomerataque multa vaporis
corpora, quae stomacho praebent incendia nostro,
dissupat adveniens liquor ac restinguit ut ignem,
urere ne possit calor amplius aridus artus.

875 sic igitur tibi anghela sitis de corpore nostro
abluitur, sic expletur ieiuna cupido.

Nunc qui fiat uti passus proferre queamus,
cum volumus, quareque datum sit membra movere
et quae res tantum hoc oneris protrudere nostri

880 corporis insuerit, dicam: tu percipe dicta.
dico animo nostro primum simulacra meandi
accidere atque animum pulsare, ut diximus ante.
inde voluntas fit; neque enim facere incipit ullam
rem quisquam, quam mens providit quid velit ante.

885 id quod providet, illius rei constat imago,
ergo animus cum sese ita commovet ut velit ire
inque gredi, ferit extemplo quae in corpore toto
per membra atque artus animai dissita vis est;
et facilest factu, quoniam coniuncta tenetur.

890 inde ea proporro corpus ferit, atque ita tota
paulatim moles protruditur atque movetur.
praeterea tum rarescit quoque corpus et aër,
scilicet ut debet qui semper mobilis extat,
per patefacta venit penetratque foramina largus,

895 et dispargitur ad partis ita quasque minutas
corporis. hic igitur rebus fit utrimque duabus,
corpus ut ac navis velis ventoque feratur.

nec tamen illud in his rebus mirabile constat,
tantula quod tantum corpus corpuscula possunt

900 contorquere et onus totum convertere nostrum;
quippe etenim ventus subtili corpore tenvis
trudit agens magnam magno molimine navem
et manus una regit quanto vis impete euntem
atque gubernaculum contorquet quo libet unum,

905 multaque per trocleas et tympana pondere magno
commovet atque levi sustollit machina nisu.

[866] and this state is attended by pain.

Food therefore is taken in order to give support to the frame and recruit the

strength by its infusion, and to close up the open-mouthed craving for meat throughout limbs and veins.

The moisture too passes into all the parts which call for moisture; and many accumulated bodies of heat which cause a burning in our stomach, the approach of liquid scatters and quenches as if they were fire, so that dry heat can no longer parch the frame.

In this way then you see gasping thirst is drenched out of our body, in this way the hungry craving is satisfied.

Now how it comes to pass that we are able to step out when we please, and how it is given us to move about our limbs, and what cause is wont to push forward the great load of this our body I will tell: do you take in my words.

I say that idols of walking first present themselves to our mind and strike on the mind, as we said before: then the will arises; for no one begins to do anything, until his mind has first determined what it wills.

From the very fact that it determines such thing, there is an image of that thing.

When therefore the mind bestirs itself in such a way as to will to walk and step out, it strikes at the same moment the force of the soul which is spread over the whole body throughout the limbs and frame; and this is easily done, since the whole is held in close union with the mind.

Next the soul in its turn strikes the body, and thus the whole mass by degrees is pushed on and set in motion.

Then again, the body becomes also rarefied, and the air, as you see its nature is, being always so nimble in moving, comes and passes in great quantity through the opened pores and is thus distributed into the most minute parts of the body.

In this way then by these two causes acting in two ways the body like a ship is carried on by sails and wind.

And herein it need not excite any surprise that such very minute bodies can steer so great a body and turn about the whole of this our load; for wind though fine with subtle body drives and pushes on a large ship of large moving mass and one hand directs it however great the speed at which it is going and one rudder steers it to any point you like; and by means of blocks of pulleys and tread-wheels a machine stirs many things of great weight and raises them up with slight effort.

Nunc quibus ille modis somnus per membra quietem
inriget atque animi curas e pectore solvat,
suavidicis potius quom multis versibus edam,
910 parvus ut est cynci melior canor, ille gruum quam
clamor in aetheriis dispersus nubibus austru.
tu mihi da tenuis auris animumque sagacem,
ne fieri negites quae dicam posse retroque
vera repulsanti discedas pectore dicta,

915 tutemet in culpa cum sis neque cernere possis.
 Principio somnus fit ubi est distracta per artus
 vis animae partimque foras eiecta recessit
 et partim contrusa magis concessit in altum;
 dissoluuntur enim tum demum membra fluuntque.
 920 nam dubium non est, animai quin opera sit
 sensus hic in nobis, quem cum sopor inpedit esse,
 tum nobis animam perturbatam esse putandumst
 eiectamque foras, non omnem; namque iaceret
 aeterno corpus perfusum frigore leti.
 925 quippe ubi nulla latens animai pars remaneret
 in membris, cinere ut multa latet obrutus ignis,
 unde reconfliari sensus per membra repente
 possit, ut ex igni caeco consurgere flamma?
 Sed quibus haec rebus novitas confiat et unde
 930 perturbari anima et corpus languescere possit,
 expediam: tu fac ne ventis verba profundam.
 Principio externa corpus de parte necessum est,
 aëriis quoniam vicinum tangitur auris,
 tundier atque eius crebro pulsarier ictu,
 935 proptereaque fere res omnes aut corio sunt
 aut etiam conchis aut callo aut cortice tectae.
 interiorem etiam partem spirantibus aër
 verberat hic idem, cum ducitur atque reflat.
 quare utrimque secus cum corpus vapulet et cum
 940 perveniant plagae per parva foramina nobis
 corporis ad primas partis elementaque prima,
 fit quasi paulatim nobis per membra ruina.
 conturbantur enim positurae principiorum
 corporis atque animi. fit uti pars inde animai
 945 eliciatur et introrsum pars abdita cedat,
 pars etiam distracta per artus non queat esse
 coniuncta inter se neque motu mutua fungi;
 inter enim saepit coetus natura viasque.
 ergo sensus abit mutatis motibus alte.

[907] Now by what means yon sleep lets a stream of repose over the limbs and dispels from the breast the cares of the mind, I will tell in sweetly worded rather than in many verses; as the short song of the swan is better than the loud noise of cranes scattered abroad amid the ethereal clouds of the south.

Do you lend me a nice ear and a keen mind, that you may not deny what I say to be possible and secede with breast disdainfully rejecting the words of truth, you yourself being in fault the while and unable to discern.

Sleep mainly takes place when the force of the soul has been scattered

about through the frame, and in part has been forced abroad and taken its departure, and in part has been thrust back and has withdrawn into the depths of the body: after that the limbs are relaxed and droop.

For there is no doubt that this sense exists in us by the agency of the soul; and when sleep obstructs the action of this sense, then we must assume that our soul has been disordered and forced abroad; not indeed all; for then the body would lie steeped in the everlasting chill of death.

Where no part of the soul remained behind concealed in the limbs, as fire remains concealed when buried under much ash, whence could sense be suddenly rekindled through the limbs, as flame can spring up from hidden fire?

But by what means this change of condition is accomplished and from what the soul can be disordered and the body grow faint, I will explain: do you mind that I waste not my words on the wind.

In the first place the body in its outer side, since it is next to and is touched by the air, must be thumped and beaten by its repeated blows; and for this reason all things as a rule are covered either by a hide or else by shells or by a callous skin or by bark.

When creatures breathe, this air at the same time buffets the inner side also, as it is inhaled and exhaled.

Therefore since the body is beaten on both sides alike and blows arrive by means of the small apertures at the primal parts and primal elements of our body, there gradually ensues a sort of breaking up throughout our limbs, the arrangements of the first-beginnings of body and mind getting disordered.

Then next a part of the soul is forced out and apart withdraws into the inner recesses; a part too scattered about through the frame cannot get united together and so act and be acted upon by motion; for nature intercepts all communication and blocks up all the passages;

950 et quoniam non est quasi quod suffulciat artus,
debile fit corpus languescuntque omnia membra,
brachia palpebraeque cadunt poplitesque cubanti
saepe tamen summittuntur virisque resolvunt.
Deinde cibum sequitur somnus, quia, quae facit aër,
955 haec eadem cibus, in venas dum diditur omnis,
efficit. et multo sopor ille gravissimus exstat,
quem satur aut lassus capias, quia plurima tum se
corpora conturbant magno contusa labore.
fit ratione eadem coniectus parte animai
960 altior atque foras eiectus largior eius,
et divisor inter se ac distractior intus.
Et quo quisque fere studio devinctus adhaeret
aut quibus in rebus multum sumus ante morati
atque in ea ratione fuit contenta magis mens,

965 in somnis eadem plerumque videmur obire:
causidici causas agere et componere leges,
induperatores pugnare ac proelia obire,
nautae contractum cum ventis degere bellum,
nos agere hoc autem et naturam quaerere rerum
970 semper et inventam patriis exponere chartis.
cetera sic studia atque artes plerumque videntur
in somnis animos hominum frustrata tenere.
et qui cumque dies multos ex ordine ludis
adsiduas dederunt operas, plerumque videmus,
975 cum iam destiterunt ea sensibus usurpare,
relicuas tamen esse vias in mente patentis,
qua possint eadem rerum simulacra venire;
per multos itaque illa dies eadem obversantur
ante oculos, etiam vigilantes ut videantur
980 cernere saltantis et mollia membra moventis
et citharae liquidum carmen chordasque loquentis
auribus accipere et consessum cernere eundem
scenaique simul varios splendere decores.
usque adeo magni refert studium atque voluntas,
985 et quibus in rebus consuerint esse operati
non homines solum sed vero animalia cuncta.
quippe videbis equos fortis, cum membra iacebunt,
in somnis sudare tamen spirareque semper
et quasi de palma summas contendere viris
990 aut quasi carceribus patefactis edere voces

[950] and therefore sense retires deep into the frame as the motions are all altered.

And since there is nothing as it were to lend support to the frame, the body becomes weak and all the limbs are faint, the arms and eyelids droop and the hams even in bed often give way under you and relax their powers.

Then sleep follows on food, because food produces just the same effects as air, while it is distributed into all the veins; and that sleep is much the heaviest which you take when full or tired, because then the greatest number of bodies fall into disorder, bruised by much exertion.

On the same principle the soul comes in part to be forced more deeply into the frame, and there is also a more copious emission of it abroad, and at the same time it is more divided and scattered in itself within you.

And generally to whatever pursuit a man is closely tied down and strongly attached, on whatever subject we have previously much dwelt, the mind having been put to a more than usual strain in it, during sleep we for the most part fancy that we are engaged in the same; lawyers think they plead causes and draw up covenants of sale, generals that they fight and engage in battle,

sailors that they wage and carry on war with the winds, we think we pursue our task and investigate the nature of things constantly and consign it when discovered to writings in our native tongue.

So all other pursuits and arts are seen for the most part during sleep to occupy and mock the minds of men.

And whenever men have given during many days in succession undivided attention to games, we generally see that after they have ceased to perceive these with their senses, there yet remain passages open in the mind through which the same idols of things may enter.

Thus for many days those same objects present themselves to the eyes, so that even when awake they see dancers as they think moving their pliant limbs, and receive into the ears the clear music of the harp and speaking strings, and behold the same spectators and at the same time the varied decorations of the stage in all their brilliancy.

So great is the influence of zeal and inclination, so great is the influence of the things in which men have been habitually engaged, and not men only but all living creatures.

Thus you will see stout horses, even when their bodies are lying down, yet in their sleep sweat and pant without ceasing and strain their powers to the utmost as if for the prize, or as if the barriers were thrown open.

venantumque canes in molli saepe quiete
iactant crura tamen subito vocisque repente
mittunt et crebro redducunt naribus auras.
ut vestigia si teneant inventa ferarum,
995 expergefactive secuntur inania saepe
cervorum simulacra, fugae quasi dedita cernant,
donec discussis redeant erroribus ad se.
at consueta domi catulorum blanda propago
discutere et corpus de terra corripere instant,
1000 iactant crura tamen subito vocisque repente
mittunt et crebro redducunt naribus auras
ut vestigia si teneant inventa ferarum
expergefactive secuntur inania saepe
proinde quasi ignotas facies atque ora tuantur.
1005 et quo quaeque magis sunt aspera seminiorem,
tam magis in somnis eadem saevire necessust.
at variae fugiunt volucres pinnisque repente
sollicitant divom nocturno tempore lucos,
accipitres somno in leni si proelia pugnas
1010 edere sunt persectantes visaeque volantes.
porro hominum mentes, magnis quae motibus edunt
magna, itidem saepe in somnis faciuntque geruntque,
reges expugnant, capiuntur, proelia miscent,

tollunt clamorem, quasi si iugulentur ibidem.
1015 multi depugnant gemitusque doloribus edunt
et quasi pantherae morsu saevive leonis
mandantur, magnis clamoribus omnia complent.
multi de magnis per somnum rebus loquuntur
indicioque sui facti persaepe fuere.
1020 multi mortem obeunt. multi, de montibus altis
ut quasi praecipitent ad terram corpore toto,
exterruntur et ex somno quasi mentibus capti
vix ad se redeunt permoti corporis aestu.
flumen item sitiens aut fontem propter amoenum
1025 adsidet et totum prope faucibus occupat amnem.
puri saepe lacum propter si ac dolia curta
somno devincti credunt se extollere vestem,
totius umorem saccatum corporis fundunt,
cum Babylonica magnifico splendore rigantur.
1030 tum quibus aetatis freta primitus insinuatur
semen, ubi ipsa dies membris matura creavit,
conveniunt simulacra foris e corpore quoque,
nuntia praeclari voltus pulchrique coloris,
qui ciet inritans loca turgida semine multo,
1035 ut quasi transactis saepe omnibus rebus profundant
fluminis ingentis fluctus vestemque cruentent.
Sollicitatur id in nobis, quod diximus ante,
semen, adulta aetas cum primum roborat artus.
namque alias aliud res commovet atque lacessit;
1040 ex homine humanum semen ciet una hominis vis.

[991] And often during soft repose the dogs of hunters do yet all at once throw about their legs and suddenly utter cries and repeatedly snuff the air with their nostrils, as though they had found and were on the tracks of wild beasts; and after they are awake often chase the shadowy idols of stags, as though they saw them in full flight, until they have shaken off their delusions and come to themselves again.

And the fawning brood of dogs brought up tame in the house haste to shake their body and raise it up from the ground, as if they beheld unknown faces and features.

And the fiercer the different breeds are, the greater rage they must display in sleep.

But the various kinds of birds flee and suddenly in the night time trouble with their wings the groves of the gods, when in gentle sleep hawks and pursuing birds have appeared to show fight and offer battle.

Again the minds of men which pursue great aims under great emotions, often during sleep pursue and carry on the same in like manner; kings take by

storm, are taken, join battle, raise aloud cry as if stabbed on the spot.

Many struggle hard and utter groans in pain, and as if gnawed by the bite of panther or cruel lion fill all the place with loud cries.

Many during sleep speak of important affairs and have often and often disclosed their own guilt.

Many meet death; many as if tumbling down from high precipices to the ground with their whole body, are scared with terror and after sleep as if out of their judgment scarce come to themselves again, quite disordered by their body's turmoil.

Again a thirsty man sits down beside a river or a pleasant spring and gulps down well-nigh all the stream.

Cleanly people often, when sound asleep, believing that they are lifting their dress beside a urinal or the public vessels, pour forth the filtered liquid of their whole body, and the Babylonian coverlets of surpassing brilliancy are drenched.

Then too those into the boiling currents of whose age seed is for the first time passing, when the ripe fulness of days has produced it in their limbs, idols encounter from without from what body soever harbingers of a glorious face and a beautiful bloom, which stir and excite the frame.

That seed we have spoken of before is stirred up in us, as soon as ripe age fortifies the frame.

For as different causes set in motion and excite different things, so from man the sole influence of man draws forth human seed.

quod simul atque suis eiectum sedibus exit,
per membra atque artus decedit corpore toto,
in loca conveniens nervorum certa cietque
continuo partis genitalis corporis ipsas.
1045 inritata tument loca semine fitque voluntas
eicere id quo se contendit dira libido,
incitat inritans loca turgida semine multo
idque petit corpus, mens unde est saucia amore;
namque omnes plerumque cadunt in vulnus et illam
1050 emicat in partem sanguis, unde icimur ictu,
et si comminus est, hostem ruber occupat amor.
sic igitur Veneris qui telis accipit ictus,
sive puer membris muliebribus hunc iaculatur
seu mulier toto iactans e corpore amorem,
1055 unde feritur, eo tendit gestitque coire
t iacere umorem in corpus de corpore ductum;
namque voluptatem praesagit muta cupido.
Haec Venus est nobis; hinc autemst nomen Amoris,
hinc illaec primum Veneris dulcedinis in cor
1060 stillavit gutta et successit frigida cura;

nam si abest quod ames, praesto simulacra tamen sunt
illius et nomen dulce obversatur ad auris.
sed fugitare decet simulacra et pabula amoris
absterrere sibi atque alio convertere mentem
1065 et iacere umorem coniectum in corpora quaeque
nec retinere semel conversum unius amore
et servare sibi curam certumque dolorem;
ulcus enim vivescit et inveterascit alendo
inque dies gliscit furor atque aerumna gravescit,
1070 si non prima novis conturbes volnera plagis
volgivagaque vagus Venere ante recentia cures
aut alio possis animi traducere motus.
Nec Veneris fructu caret is qui vitat amorem,
sed potius quae sunt sine poena commoda sumit;
1075 nam certe purast sanis magis inde voluptas
quam miseris; etenim potiundi tempore in ipso
fluctuat incertis erroribus ardor amantum
nec constat quid primum oculis manibusque fruantur.
quod petiere, premunt arte faciuntque dolorem
1080 corporis et dentes inlidunt saepe labellis
osculaque adfigunt, quia non est pura voluptas
et stimuli subsunt, qui instigant laedere id ipsum,
quod cumque est, rabies unde illaec germina surgunt.

[1041] As soon then as it has been forced out from and quits its proper seats throughout the limbs and frame, it withdraws itself from the whole body and meets together in appropriate places and rouses forthwith the appropriate parts of the body.

The places are excited and swell with seed, and the inclination arises to emit the seed towards that to which the fell desire all tends, and the body seeks that object from which the mind is wounded by love; for all as a rule fall towards their wound and the blood spurts out in that direction whence comes the stroke by which we are struck; and if he is at close quarters, the red stream covers the foe.

Thus then he who gets a hurt from the weapons of Venus, whatever be the object that hits him, inclines to the quarter whence he is wounded, and yearns to unite with it and join body with body; for a mute desire gives a presage of the pleasure.

This pleasure is for us Venus; from that desire is the Latin name of love, from that desire has first trickled into the heart yon drop of Venus' honeyed joy, succeeded soon by chilly care; for though that which you love is away, yet idols of it are at hand and its sweet name is present to the ears.

But it is meet to fly idols and scare away all that feeds love and turn your mind on another object, distract your passion elsewhere and not keep it, with

your thoughts once set on one object by love of it, and so lay up for yourself care and unfailling pain.

For the sore gathers strength and becomes inveterate by feeding, and every day the madness grows in violence and the misery becomes aggravated, unless you erase the first wounds by new blows and first heal them when yet fresh, roaming abroad after Venus the pandemian, or transfer to something else the emotions of your mind.

Nor is he who shuns love without the fruits of Venus, but rather enjoys those blessings which are without any pain: doubtless the pleasure from such things is more unalloyed for the healthy-minded than for the love-sick; for in the very moment of enjoying the burning desire of lovers wavers and wanders undecided, and they cannot tell what first to enjoy with eyes and hands.

What they have sought, they tightly squeeze and cause pain of body and often imprint their teeth on the lips and clash mouth to mouth in kissing, because the pleasure is not pure and there are hidden stings which stimulate to hurt, even that whatever it is from which spring those germs of frenzy.

sed leviter poenas frangit Venus inter amorem
1085 blandaque refrenat morsus admixta voluptas.
namque in eo spes est, unde est ardoris origo,
restingui quoque posse ab eodem corpore flammam.
quod fieri contra totum natura repugnat;
unaque res haec est, cuius quam plurima habemus,
1090 tam magis ardescit dira cuppedine pectus.
nam cibus atque umor membris adsumitur intus;
quae quoniam certas possunt obsidere partis,
hoc facile expletur laticum frugumque cupido.
ex hominis vero facie pulchroque colore
1095 nil datur in corpus praeter simulacra fruendum
tenvia; quae vento spes raptast saepe misella.
ut bibere in somnis sitiens quom quaerit et umor
non datur, ardorem qui membris stingere possit,
sed laticum simulacra petit frustraue laborat
1100 in medioque sitit torrenti flumine potans,
sic in amore Venus simulacris ludit amantis,
nec satiare queunt spectando corpora coram
nec manibus quicquam teneris abrasdere membris
possunt errantes incerti corpore toto.
1105 denique cum membris conlatis flore fruuntur
aetatis, iam cum praesagit gaudia corpus
atque in eost Venus ut muliebria conserat arva,
adfigunt avide corpus iunguntque salivas
oris et inspirant pressantes dentibus ora,
1110 ne quiquam, quoniam nihil inde abrasdere possunt

nec penetrare et abire in corpus corpore toto;
nam facere inter dum velle et certare videntur.
usque adeo cupide in Veneris compagibus haerent,
membra voluptatis dum vi labefacta liquescunt.
1115 tandem ubi se erupit nervis coniecta cupido,
parva fit ardoris violenti pausa parumper.
inde redit rabies eadem et furor ille revisit,
cum sibi quod cupiant ipsi contingere quaerunt,
nec reperire malum id possunt quae machina vincat.
1120 usque adeo incerti tabescunt vulnere caeco.
Adde quod absumunt viris pereuntque labore,
adde quod alterius sub nutu degitur aetas,
languent officia atque aegrotat fama vacillans.

[1084] But Venus with light hand breaks the force of these pains during love, and the fond pleasure mingled therein reins in the bites.

For in this there is hope, that from the same body whence springs their burning desire, their flame may likewise be quenched; though nature protests that the very opposite is the truth; and this is the one thing of all in which, when we have most of it, then all the more the breast burns with fell desire.

Meat and drink are taken into the body; and as they can fill up certain fixed parts, in this way the craving for drink and bread is easily satisfied; but from the face and beautiful bloom of man nothing is given into the body to enjoy save flimsy idols; a sorry hope which is often snatched off by the wind.

As when in sleep a thirsty man seeks to drink and water is not given to quench the burning in his frame, but he seeks the idols of waters and toils in vain and thirsts as he drinks in the midst of the torrent stream, thus in love Venus mocks lovers with idols, nor can bodies satisfy them by all their gazing upon them nor can they with their hands rub aught off the soft limbs, wandering undecided over the whole body.

At last when they have united and enjoy the flower of age, when the body now has a presage of delights and Venus is in the mood to sow the fields of woman, they greedily clasp each other's body and suck each other's lips and breathe in, pressing meanwhile teeth on each other's mouth; all in vain, since they can rub nothing off nor enter and pass each with his whole body into the other's body; for so sometimes they seem to will and strive to do: so greedily are they held in the chains of Venus, while their limbs melt overpowered by the might of the pleasure.

At length when the gathered desire has gone forth, there ensues for a brief while a short pause in the burning passion; and then returns the same frenzy, then comes back the old madness, when they are at a loss to know what they really desire to get, and cannot find what device is to conquer that mischief; in such utter uncertainty they pine away by a hidden wound.

Then too they waste their strength and ruin themselves by the labor, then

too their life is passed at the beck of another.

Meanwhile their estate runs away and is turned into Babylonian coverlets;

labitur interea res et Babylonia fiunt

1125 unguenta et pulchra in pedibus Sicyonia rident,

scilicet et grandes viridi cum luce zmaragdi

auro includuntur teriturque thalassina vestis

adsidue et Veneris sudorem exercita potat.

et bene parta patrum fiunt anademata, mitrae,

1130 inter dum in pallam atque Alidensia Ciauque vertunt.

eximia veste et victu convivia, ludi,

popula crebra, unguenta, coronae, sarta parantur,

ne quiquam, quoniam medio de fonte leporum

surgit amari aliquid, quod in ipsis floribus angat,

1135 aut cum conscius ipse animus se forte remordet

desidiose agere aetatem lustrisque perire,

aut quod in ambiguo verbum iaculata reliquit,

quod cupido adfixum cordi vivescit ut ignis,

aut nimium iactare oculos aliumve tueri

1140 quod putat in voltuque videt vestigia risus.

Atque in amore mala haec proprio summeque secundo

inveniuntur; in adverso vero atque inopi sunt,

prendere quae possis oculorum lumine operto.

innumerabilia; ut melius vigilare sit ante,

1145 qua docui ratione, cavereque, ne inliciaris.

nam vitare, plagas in amoris ne iaciamur,

non ita difficile est quam captum retibus ipsis

exire et validos Veneris perrumpere nodos.

et tamen implicitus quoque possis inque peditus

1150 effugere infestum, nisi tute tibi obuius obstes

et praetermittas animi vitia omnia primum

aut quae corporis sunt eius, quam praepetis ac vis.

nam faciunt homines plerumque cupidine caeci

et tribuunt ea quae non sunt his commoda vere.

1155 multimodis igitur pravus turpisque videmus

esse in deliciis summoque in honore vigere.

atque alios alii inrident Veneremque suadent

ut placent, quoniam foedo adfligentur amore,

nec sua respiciunt miseri mala maxima saepe.

1160 nigra melichrus est, immunda et fetida acosmos,

caesia Palladium, nervosa et lignea dorcas,

parvula, pumilio, chariton mia, tota merum sal,

magna atque inmanis cataplexis plenaque honoris.

On her feet laugh elastic and beautiful Sicyonian shoes, yes, and large emeralds with green light are set in gold and the sea-colored dress is worn constantly and much used drinks in the sweat.

The noble earnings of their fathers are turned into hair-bands, head-dresses; sometimes are changed into a sweeping robe and Alidensian and Cean dresses.

Feasts set out with rich coverlets and viands, games, numerous cups, perfumes crowns and garlands are prepared; all in vain, since out of the very well-spring of delights rises up something of bitter, to pain amid the very flowers; either when the conscience-stricken mind haply gnaws itself with remorse to think that it is passing a life of sloth and ruining itself in brothels, or because she has launched forth some word and left its meaning in doubt and it cleaves to the love-sick heart and bums like living fire, or because it fancies she casts her eyes too freely about or looks on another, and it sees in her face traces of a smile.

And these evils are found in love that is lasting and highly prosperous; but in crossed and hopeless love are ills such as you may seize with closed eyes, past numbering; so that it is better to watch before-hand in the manner I have prescribed, and be on your guard not to be drawn in.

For to avoid falling into the toils of love is not so hard as, after you are caught, to get out of the nets you are in and to break through the strong meshes of Venus.

And yet even when you are entangled and held fast you may escape the mischief, unless you stand in your own way and begin by overlooking all the defects of her mind or those of her body, whoever it is whom you court and woo.

For this men usually do, blinded by passion, and attribute to the beloved those advantages which are not really theirs.

We therefore see women in ways manifold deformed and ugly to be objects of endearment and held in the highest admiration.

And one lover jeers at others and advises them to propitiate Venus, since they are troubled by a disgraceful passion, and often, poor wretch, gives no thought to his own ills greatest of all.

The black is a brune, the filthy and rank has not the love of order; the cat-eyed is a miniature Pallas, the stringy and wizened a gazelle; the dumpy and dwarfish is one of the graces, from top to toe all grace; the big and overgrown is awe-inspiring and full of dignity.

balba loqui non quit, traulizi, muta pudens est;

¹¹⁶⁵ at flagrans, odiosa, loquacula Lampadium fit.

ischnon eromenion tum fit, cum vivere non quit
prae macie; rhadine verost iam mortua tussi.

at nimia et mammosa Ceres est ipsa ab Iaccho,
simula Silena ac Saturast, labeosa philema.

1170 cetera de genere hoc longum est si dicere coner.
 sed tamen esto iam quantovis oris honore,
 cui Veneris membris vis omnibus exoriatur;
 nempe aliae quoque sunt; nempe hac sine viximus ante;
 nempe eadem facit et scimus facere omnia turpi
 1175 et miseram taetris se suffit odoribus ipsa,
 quam famulae longe fugitant furtimque cachinnant.
 at lacrimans exclusus amator limina saepe
 floribus et sertis operit postisque superbos
 unguis amaracino et foribus miser oscula figit;
 1180 quem si iam ammissum venientem offenderit aura
 una modo, causas abeundi quaerat honestas
 et meditata diu cadat alte sumpta querella
 stultitiaque ibi se damnet, tribuisse quod illi
 plus videat quam mortali concedere par est.
 1185 nec Veneres nostras hoc fallit; quo magis ipsae
 omnia summo opere hos vitae poscaenia celant,
 quos retinere volunt adstrictosque esse in amore,
 ne quiquam, quoniam tu animo tamen omnia possis
 protrahere in lucem atque omnis inquirere risus
 1190 et, si bello animos et non odiosa, vicissim
 praetermittere et humanis concedere rebus.
 Nec mulier semper ficto suspirat amore,
 quae complexa viri corpus cum corpore iungit
 et tenet adsuctis umectans oscula labris;
 1195 nam facit ex animo saepe et communia quaerens
 gaudia sollicitat spatium decurrere amoris.
 nec ratione alia volucres armenta feraeque
 et pecudes et equae maribus subsidere possent,
 si non, ipsa quod illarum subat, ardet abundans
 1200 natura et Venerem salientum laeta retractat.

[1164] She is tongue-tied, cannot speak, then she has a lisp; the dumb is bashful; then the fire-spit, the teasing, the gossiping turns to a shining lamp.

One becomes a slim darling then when she cannot live from want of flesh; and she is only spare, who is half-dead with cough.

Then the fat and big-breasted is a Ceres' self big-breasted from Iacchus; the pug-nosed is a she Silenus and a satyress; the thick-lipped a very kiss.

It were tedious to attempt to report other things of the kind.

Let her however be of ever so great dignity of appearance; such that the power of Venus goes forth from all her limbs; yet there are others too; yet have we lived without her before; yet does she do, and we know that she does, in all things the same as the ugly woman; and fumigates herself, poor wretch, with nauseous perfumes, her very maids running from her and giggling behind

her back.

But the lover, when shut out, often in tears covers the threshold with flowers and wreaths, and anoints the haughty doorposts with oil of marjoram; and imprints kisses, poor wretch, on the doors.

When however he has been admitted, if on his approach but one single breath should come in his way, he would seek specious reasons for departing, and the long-conned deep drawn complaint would fall to the ground; and then he would blame his folly on seeing that he had attributed to her more than it is right to concede to a mortal.

Nor is this unknown to our Venuses; wherefore all the more they themselves hide with the utmost pains all that goes on behind the scenes of life from those whom they wish to retain in the chains of love; but in vain, since you may yet draw forth from her mind into the light all these things and search into all her smiles; and if she is of a fair mind and not troublesome, overlook them in your turn and make allowance for human failings.

Nor does the woman sigh always with feigned passion, when she locks in her embrace and joins with her body the man's body and holds it, sucking his lips into her lips and drinking in his kisses.

Often she does it from the heart, and seeking mutual joys courts him to run the complete race of love.

And in no other way could birds, cattle, wild beasts, sheep and mares submit to bear the males, except because the very exuberance of nature in the females is in heat and burns and joyously draws in the Venus of the covering males.

nonne vides etiam quos mutua saepe voluptas
vinxit, ut in vinclis communibus excrucientur,
in triviis cum saepe canes discedere aventis
divorsi cupide summis ex viribus tendunt,
1205 quom interea validis Veneris compagibus haerent?
quod facerent numquam, nisi mutua gaudia nossent,
quae iacere in fraudem possent vinctosque tenere.
quare etiam atque etiam, ut dico, est communis voluptas.
Et commiscendo quom semine forte virilem
1210 femina vim vicit subita vi corripuitque,
tum similes matrum materno semine fiunt,
ut patribus patrio. sed quos utriusque figurae
esse vides, iuxtim miscentes vulta parentum,
corpore de patrio et materno sanguine crescunt,
1215 semina cum Veneris stimulis excita per artus
obvia confligit conspirans mutuus ardor,
et neque utrum superavit eorum nec superatumst.
fit quoque ut inter dum similes existere avorum
possint et referant proavorum saepe figuras,

1220 propterea quia multa modis primordia multis
mixta suo celant in corpore saepe parentis,
quae patribus patres tradunt a stirpe profecta.
inde Venus varia producit sorte figuras,
maiorumque refert voltus vocesque comasque;
1225 quandoquidem nihilo magis haec de semine certo
fiunt quam facies et corpora membraque nobis.
et muliebre oritur patrio de semine saeculum
maternoque mares existunt corpore creti;
semper enim partus duplici de semine constat,
1230 atque utri similest magis id quod cumque creatur,
eius habet plus parte aequa; quod cernere possis,
sive virum suboles sive muliebris origo.
Nec divina satum genitalem numina cuiquam
absterrent, pater a gnatis ne dulcibus umquam
1235 appelletur et ut sterili Venere exigit aevom;
quod plerumque putant et multo sanguine maesti
conspargunt aras adolentque altaria donis,
ut gravidas reddant uxores semine largo;

[1201] See you not too how those whom mutual pleasure has chained are often tortured in their common chains?

How often in the highways do dogs, desiring to separate, eagerly pull different ways with all their might, while all the time they are held fast in the strong fetters of Venus!

This they would never do, unless they experienced mutual joys strong enough to force them into the snare and hold them in its meshes.

Wherefore again and again I repeat there is a common pleasure.

And when haply in mixing her seed with the man's, the woman by sudden force has overpowered and seized for herself his force, then children are formed from the mothers' seed like to the mothers, as from the fathers' seed like to the fathers.

But those whom you see with a share of both forms, blending equally the features of the parents, grow from the union of the father's body and the mother's blood, when the mutual ardor of desire working in concert has brought and clashed together the seeds roused throughout the frame by the goads of Venus; and neither of the two has gotten the mastery nor has been mastered.

Sometimes too the children may spring up like their grandfathers and often resemble the forms of their grandfathers' fathers, because the parents often keep concealed in their bodies many first-beginnings mixed in many ways, which first proceeding from the original stock one father hands down to the next father; and then from these Venus produces forms after a manifold chance and repeats not only the features, but the voices and hair of their

forefathers.

And the female sex equally springs from the father's seed and males go forth equally formed from the mother's body; since these distinctions no more proceed from the fixed seed of one or other parent than our faces and bodies and limbs: the birth is always formed out of the two seeds; and whichever parent that which is produced more resembles of that parent it has more than an equal share; as you may equally observe, whether it is a male child or a female birth.

Nor do the divine powers debar anybody from the power of begetting, forbidding him ever to receive the name of father from sweet children and forcing him to pass his life in a barren wedlock; as men commonly fancy when in sorrow they drench the altars with much blood and pile the raised altars with offerings, to make their wives pregnant with abundant seed.

ne quiquam divom numen sortisque fatigant;
1240 nam steriles nimium crasso sunt semine partim,
et liquido praeter iustum tenuique vicissim.
tenve locis quia non potis est adfigere adhaesum,
liquitur extemplo et revocatum cedit abortu.
crassius hinc porro quoniam concretius aequo
1245 mittitur, aut non tam prolixo provolat ictu
aut penetrare locos aequae nequit aut penetratum
aegre admiscetur muliebri semine semen.
nam multum harmoniae Veneris differre videntur.
atque alias alii complent magis ex aliisque
1250 succipiunt aliae pondus magis inque gravescunt.
et multae steriles Hymenaeis ante fuerunt
pluribus et nactae post sunt tamen unde puellus
suscipere et partu possent ditescere dulci.
et quibus ante domi fecundae saepe nequissent
1255 uxoris parere, inventast illis quoque compar
natura, ut possent gnatis munire senectam.
usque adeo magni refert, ut semina possint
seminibus commisceri genitaliter apta
crassaque convenient liquidis et liquida crassis.
1260 atque in eo refert quo victu vita colatur;
namque aliis rebus concrescunt semina membris
atque aliis extendantur tabentque vicissim.
et quibus ipsa modis tractetur blanda voluptas.
id quoque permagni refert; nam more ferarum
1265 quadrupedumque magis ritu plerumque putantur
concipere uxores, quia sic loca sumere possunt
pectoribus positis sublati semina lumbis.
nec molles opus sunt motus uxoribus hilum.

nam mulier prohibet se concipere atque repugnat,
1270 clunibus ipsa viri Venerem si laeta retractat
atque exossato ciet omni pectore fluctus;
eicit enim sulcum recta regione viaque
vomeris atque locis avertit seminis ictum.
idque sua causa consuerunt scorta moveri,
1275 ne complerentur crebro gravidaeque iacerent,
et simul ipsa viris Venus ut concinnior esset;
coniugibus quod nil nostris opus esse videtur.
Nec divinitus inter dum Venerisque sagittis
deteriore fit ut forma muliercula ametur;

[1239] In vain they weary the divinity of the gods and the sacred lots.

They are barren sometimes from the too great thickness of the seed, sometimes from its undue fluidity and thinness: because the thin is unable to get a firm hold on the right spots, it at once passes away and is repelled and withdrawn abortively: since by others again a too thick seed is discharged in a state more solid than is suitable, it either does not fly forth with so prolonged a stroke or cannot equally pass into the proper spots or when it has passed in with difficulty mixes with the woman's seed.

For well-assorted matches are found to be of great importance; and some males impregnate some females more readily than others, and other females conceive and become pregnant more readily from other males.

And many women have hitherto been barren during several marriages and have yet in the end found mates from whom they could conceive children and be enriched with a sweet offspring.

And often even for those to whom hitherto wives however fruitful had been unable in their house to bear, has been found a compatible nature, enabling them to fortify their age with sons.

Of such great importance is it in order that seeds may agree and blend with seeds in a way to promote birth whether the thick comes into contact with the fluid and the fluid with the thick.

And on this point it matters much on what diet life is supported; for by some foods seed is thickened in the limbs, and by others again is thinned and wasted.

And in what modes the intercourse goes on, is likewise of very great moment; for women are commonly thought to conceive more readily after the manner of wild beasts and quadrupeds, because the seeds in this way can find the proper spots in consequence of the position of the body.

Nor have wives the least use for effeminate motions: a woman hinders and stands in the way of her own conceiving, when thus she acts; for she drives the furrow out of the direct course and path of the share and turns away from the proper spots the stroke of the seed.

And thus for their own ends harlots are wont to move, in order not to

conceive and lie in child-bed frequently, and at the same time to render Venus more attractive to men.

This our wives have surely no need of.

Sometimes too by no divine grace and arrows of Venus a sorry woman of inferior beauty comes to be loved;

1280 nam facit ipsa suis inter dum femina factis
morigerisque modis et munde corpore culto,
ut facile insuescat secum te degere vitam.
quod super est, consuetudo concinnat amorem;
nam leviter quamvis quod crebro tunditur ictu,
1285 vincitur in longo spatio tamen atque labascit.
nonne vides etiam guttas in saxa cadentis
umoris longo in spatio pertundere saxa?

[1280] for the wife sometimes by her own acts and accommodating manners and by elegant neatness of person readily habituates you to pass your life with her.

Moreover custom renders love attractive; for that which is struck by oft-repeated blows however lightly, yet after long course of time is overpowered and gives way.

See you not too that drops of water falling on stones after long course of time scoop a hole through these stones?

Liber Quintus — BOOK V.

Quis potis est dignum pollenti pectore carmen
condere pro rerum maiestate hisque repertis?
quisve valet verbis tantum, qui fingere laudes
pro meritis eius possit, qui talia nobis
5 pectore parta suo quaesitaeque praemia liquit?
nemo, ut opinor, erit mortali corpore cretus.
nam si, ut ipsa petit maiestas cognita rerum,
dicendum est, deus ille fuit, deus, inclyte Memmi,
qui princeps vitae rationem invenit eam quae
10 nunc appellatur sapientia, quique per artem
fluctibus et tantis vitam tantisque tenebris
in tam tranquillo et tam clara luce locavit.
confer enim divina aliorum antiqua reperta.
namque Ceres fertur fruges Liberque liquoris
15 vitigeni laticem mortalibus instituisse;
cum tamen his posset sine rebus vita manere,
ut fama est aliquas etiam nunc vivere gentis.
at bene non poterat sine puro pectore vivi;
quo magis hic merito nobis deus esse videtur,
20 ex quo nunc etiam per magnas didita gentis
dulcia permulcent animos solacia vitae.
Herculis antistare autem si facta putabis,
longius a vera multo ratione ferere.
quid Nemeaeus enim nobis nunc magnus hiatus
25 ille leonis obsesset et horrens Arcadius sus,
tanto opere officerent nobis Stymphala colentes?
denique quid Cretae taurus Lernaeeque pestis
hydra venenatis posset vallata colubris?
quidve tripectora tergemini vis Geryonai
30 et Diomedis equi spirantes naribus ignem
Thracia Bistoniasque plagas atque Ismara propter

[1] WHO is able with powerful genius to frame a poem worthy of the grandeur of the things and these discoveries? Or who is so great a master of words as to be able to devise praises equal to the deserts of him who left to us such prizes won and earned by his own genius? None, methinks, who is formed of mortal body.

For if we must speak as the acknowledged grandeur of the things itself demands, a god he was, a god, most noble Memmius, who first found out that plan of life which is now termed wisdom, and who by trained skill rescued life from such great billows and such thick darkness and moored it in so

perfect a calm and in so brilliant a light.

Compare the godlike discoveries of others in old times: Ceres is famed to have pointed out to mortals corn, and Liber the vine-born juice of the grape; though life might well have subsisted without these things, as we are told some nations even now live without them.

But a happy life was not possible without a clean breast; wherefore with more reason this man is deemed by us a god, from whom come those sweet solaces of existence which even now are distributed over great nations and gently soothe men's minds.

Then if you shall suppose that the deeds of Hercules surpass his, you will be carried still farther away from true reason.

For what would yon great gaping maw of Nemean lion now harm us and the bristled Arcadian boar?

Ay or what could the bull of Crete do and the hydra plague of Lerna, fenced round with its envenomed snakes?

Or how could the triple-breasted might of threefold Geryon, [how could the birds with brazen arrowy feathers] that dwelt in the Stymphalian swamps do us such mighty injury, and the horses of Thracian Diomed breathing fire from their nostrils along the Bistonian borders and Ismara?

aureaque Hesperidum servans fulgentia mala,
asper, acerba tuens, immani corpore serpens
arboris amplexus stirpes? quid denique obsesset
35 propter Atlanteum litus pelagique severa,
quo neque noster adit quisquam nec barbarus audet?
cetera de genere hoc quae sunt portenta perempta,
si non victa forent, quid tandem viva nocerent?
nil, ut opinor: ita ad satietatem terra ferarum
40 nunc etiam scatit et trepido terrore repleta est
per nemora ac montes magnos silvasque profundas;
quae loca vitandi plerumque est nostra potestas.
at nisi purgatumst pectus, quae proelia nobis
atque pericula tumst ingratis insinuandum!
45 quantae tum scindunt hominem cuppedinis acres
sollicitum curae quantique perinde timores!
quidve superbia spurcitia ac petulantia? quantas
efficiunt clades! quid luxus desidiaequae?
haec igitur qui cuncta subegerit ex animoque
50 expulerit dictis, non armis, nonne decebit
hunc hominem numero divom dignarier esse?
cum bene praesertim multa ac divinitus ipsis
iam mortalibus e divis dare dicta suerit
atque omnem rerum naturam pandere dictis.
55 Cuius ego ingressus vestigia dum rationes

persequor ac doceo dictis, quo quaeque creata
foedere sint, in eo quam sit durare necessum
nec validas valeant aevi rescindere leges,
quo genere in primis animi natura reperta est
60 nativo primum consistere corpore creta,
nec posse incolumem magnum durare per aevum,
sed simulacra solere in somnis fallere mentem,
cernere cum videamur eum quem vita reliquit,
quod super est, nunc huc rationis detulit ordo,
65 ut mihi mortali consistere corpore mundum
nativomque simul ratio reddunda sit esse;
et quibus ille modis congressus materiai
fundarit terram caelum mare sidera solem
lunaique globum; tum quae tellure animantes
70 extiterint, et quae nullo sint tempore natae;
quove modo genus humanum variante loquella
coeperit inter se vesci per nomina rerum;

[32] And the serpent which guards the bright golden apples of the Hesperides, fierce, dangerous of aspect, girding the tree's stem with his enormous body, what harm pray could he do us beside the Atlantic shore and its sounding main, which none of us goes near and no barbarian ventures to approach?

And all other monsters of the kind which have been destroyed, if they had not been vanquished, what harm could they do, I ask, though now alive?

None methinks: the earth even now so abounds to repletion in wild beasts and is filled with troublous terror throughout woods and great mountains and deep forests; places which we have it for the most part in our own power to shun.

But unless the breast is cleared, what battles and dangers must then find their way into us in our own despite! What poignant cares inspired by lust then rend the distressful man, and then also what mighty fears! And pride, filthy lust and wantonness? What disasters they occasion! And luxury and all sorts of sloth?

He therefore who shall have subdued all these and banished them from the mind by words, not arms, shall he not have a just title to be ranked among the gods?

And all the more so that he was wont to deliver many precepts in beautiful and god-like phrase about the immortal gods themselves and to open up by his teachings all the nature of things.

While walking in his footsteps I follow out his reasonings and teach by my verses, by what law all things are made, what necessity there is then for them to continue in that law, and how impotent they are to annul the binding statutes of time: foremost in which class of things the nature of the mind has

been proved to be formed of a body that had birth and to be unable to endure unscathed through great time, mere idols being wont to mock the mind in sleep, when we seem to see him whom life has abandoned.

To continue, the order of my design has now brought me to this point, where I must proceed to show that the world is formed of a mortal body and at the same time had birth; to show too in what way that union of matter founded earth, heaven, sea, stars, sun, and the ball of the moon; also what living creatures sprang out of the earth, as well as those which never at any time were born; in what way too mankind began to use with one another varied speech by the names conferred on things;

et quibus ille modis divom metus insinuarit
pectora, terrarum qui in orbi sancta tuetur
75 fana lacus lucos aras simulacraque divom.
praeterea solis cursus lunaeque meatus
expediam qua vi flectat natura gubernans;
ne forte haec inter caelum terramque reamur
libera sponte sua cursus lustrare perennis,
80 morigera ad fruges augendas atque animantis,
neve aliqua divom volvi ratione putemus.
nam bene qui didicere deos securum agere aevom,
si tamen interea mirantur qua ratione
quaeque geri possint, praesertim rebus in illis
85 quae supera caput aetheriis cernuntur in oris,
rursus in antiquas referuntur religiones
et dominos acris adsciscunt, omnia posse
quos miseri credunt, ignari quid queat esse,
quid nequeat, finita potestas denique cuique
90 qua nam sit ratione atque alte terminus haerens.
Quod super est, ne te in promissis plura moremur,
principio maria ac terras caelumque tuere;
quorum naturam triplicem, tria corpora, Memmi,
tris species tam dissimilis, tria talia texta,
95 una dies dabit exitio, multosque per annos
sustentata ruet moles et machina mundi.
nec me animi fallit quam res nova miraque menti
accidat exitium caeli terraeque futurum,
et quam difficile id mihi sit pervincere dictis;
100 ut fit ubi insolitam rem adportes auribus ante
nec tamen hanc possis oculorum subdere visu
nec iacere indu manus, via qua munita fidei
proxima fert humanum in pectus templaque mentis.
sed tamen effabor. dictis dabit ipsa fidem res
105 forsitan et graviter terrarum motibus ortis

omnia conquassari in parvo tempore cernes.
quod procul a nobis flectat fortuna gubernans,
et ratio potius quam res persuadeat ipsa
succidere horrissono posse omnia victa fragore.
¹¹⁰ Qua prius adgrediar quam de re fundere fata
sanctius et multo certa ratione magis quam
Pythia quae tripode a Phoebi lauroque profatur,
multa tibi expediam doctis solacia dictis;

[73] and also in what ways yon fear of the gods gained an entry into men's breasts, and now throughout the world maintains as holy fanes, lakes, groves, altars, and idols of the gods.

Furthermore, I shall make clear by what force piloting nature guides the courses of the sun and the wanderings of the moon; lest haply we imagine that these of their own free will between heaven and earth traverse their everlasting orbits, graciously furthering the increase of crops and living creatures, or we think they roll on by any forethought of the gods.

For they who have been rightly taught that the gods lead a life without care, if nevertheless they wonder by what plan all things can be carried on, above all in regard to those things which are seen overhead in the ethereal borders, are borne back again into their old religious scruples and take unto themselves hard taskmasters, whom they poor wretches believe to be almighty, not knowing what can, what cannot be, in short by what system each thing has its powers defined, its deep-set boundary mark.

Well then not to detain you any longer by mere promises, look before all on seas and lands and heaven: their threefold nature, their three bodies, Memmius, three forms so unlike, three such wondrous textures a single day shall give over to destruction; and the mass and fabric of the world upheld for many years shall tumble to ruin.

Nor can I fail to perceive with what a novel and strange effect it falls upon the mind, this destruction of heaven and earth that is to be, and how hard it is for me to produce a full conviction of it by words; as is the case when you bring to the ears a thing hitherto unexampled, and yet you cannot submit it to the eyesight nor put it into the hands; through which the straightest highway of belief leads into the human breast and quarters of the mind.

But yet I will speak out: it well may be that the reality itself will bring credit to my words and that you will see earthquakes arise and all things grievously shattered to pieces in a short time.

But this may pilot fortune guide far away from us, and may reason rather than the reality convince that all things may be overpowered and tumble in with a frightful crash.

But before I shall begin on this question to pour forth decrees of fate with more sanctity and much more certainty than the Pythia who speaks out from the tripod and laurel of Phoebus, I will clearly set forth to you many

comforting topics in learned language;

religione refrenatus ne forte rearis

115 terras et solem et caelum, mare sidera lunam,
corpore divino debere aeterna manere,
proptereaque putes ritu par esse Gigantum
pendere eos poenas inmani pro scelere omnis,
qui ratione sua disturbent moenia mundi

120 praeclarumque velint caeli restinguere solem
immortalia mortali sermone notantes;

quae procul usque adeo divino a numine distent
inque deum numero quae sint indigna videri,
notitiam potius praebere ut posse putentur

125 quid sit vitali motu sensuque remotum.

quippe etenim non est, cum quovis corpore ut esse
posse animi natura putetur consiliumque.

sicut in aethere non arbor, non aequore salso
nubes esse queunt neque pisces vivere in arvis

130 nec cruor in lignis neque saxis sucus inesse,
certum ac dispositumst ubi quicquid crescat et insit,
sic animi natura nequit sine corpore oriri
sola neque a nervis et sanguine longius esse.

quod si posset enim, multo prius ipsa animi vis

135 in capite aut umeris aut imis calcibus esse
posset et innasci quavis in parte soleret,

tandem in eodem homine atque in eodem vase manere.

quod quoniam nostro quoque constat corpore certum
dispositumque videtur ubi esse et crescere possit

140 seorsum anima atque animus, tanto magis infitiandum
totum posse extra corpus formamque animalem

putribus in glebis terrarum aut solis in igni
aut in aqua durare aut altis aetheris oris.

haud igitur constant divino praedita sensu,

145 quandoquidem nequeunt vitaliter esse animata.

Illud item non est ut possis credere, sedes
esse deum sanctas in mundi partibus ullis.

tenuis enim natura deum longeque remota
sensibus ab nostris animi vix mente videtur;

150 quae quoniam manuum tactum suffugit et ictum,
tactile nil nobis quod sit contingere debet;

tangere enim non quit quod tangi non licet ipsum.

quare etiam sedes quoque nostris sedibus esse
dissimiles debent, tenues de corpore eorum;

155 quae tibi posterius largo sermone probabo.

Dicere porro hominum causa voluisse parare
praeclaram mundi naturam proptereaque
adlaudabile opus divom laudare decere
aeternumque putare atque inmortale futurum,
160 nec fas esse, deum quod sit ratione vetusta
gentibus humanis fundatum perpetuo aevo,
sollicitare suis ulla vi ex sedibus umquam
nec verbis vexare et ab imo evertere summa,

[114] lest held in the yoke of religion you haply suppose that earth and sun and heaven, sea, stars and moon must last for ever with divine body; and therefore think it right that they after the fashion of the giants should all suffer punishment for their monstrous guilt, who by their reasoning displace the walls of the world and seek to quench the glorious sun of heaven, branding immortal things in mortal speech; though in truth these things are so far from possessing divinity and are so unworthy of being reckoned in the number of gods, that they may be thought to afford a notable instance of what is quite without vital motion and sense.

For it is quite impossible to suppose that the nature and judgment of the mind can exist with any body whatever; even as a tree cannot exist in the ether nor clouds in the salt sea, nor can fishes live in the fields nor blood exist in woods nor sap in stones.

Where each thing can grow and abide is fixed and ordained.

Thus the nature of the mind cannot come into being alone without the body nor exist far away from the sinews and blood.

But if (for this would be much more likely to happen than that) the force itself of the mind might be in the head or shoulders or heels or might be born in any other part of the body, it would after all be wont to abide in one and the same man or vessel.

But since in our body even it is fixed and seen to be ordained where the soul and the mind can severally be and grow, it must still more strenuously be denied that it can abide out of the body and the living form altogether in crumbling clods of earth or in the fire of the sun or in water or in the high borders of ether.

These things therefore are not possessed of divine sense, since they cannot be quickened with the vital feeling.

This too you may not possibly believe, that the holy seats of the gods exist in any parts of the world: the fine nature of the gods far withdrawn from our senses is hardly seen by the thought of the mind; and since it has ever eluded the touch and stroke of the hands, it must touch nothing which is tangible for us; for that cannot touch which does not admit of being touched in turn.

And therefore their seats as well must be unlike our seats, fine, even as their bodies are fine.

All which I will prove to you later in copious argument.

To say again that for the sake of men they have willed to set in order the glorious nature of the world and therefore it is meet to praise the work of the gods, calling as it does for all praise, and to believe that it will be eternal and immortal, and that it is an unholy thing ever to shake by any force from its fixed seats that which by the forethought of the gods in ancient days has been established on everlasting foundations for mankind, or to assail it by speech and utterly overturn it from top to bottom;

cetera de genere hoc adfingere et addere, Memmi,
165 desiperest. quid enim immortalibus atque beatis
gratia nostra queat largiri emolumentum,
ut nostra quicquam causa gerere adgrediantur?

quidve novi potuit tanto post ante quietos
inlicere ut cuperent vitam mutare priorem?

170 nam gaudere novis rebus debere videtur
cui veteres obsunt; sed cui nihil accidit aegri
tempore in ante acto, cum pulchre degeret aevum,
quid potuit novitatis amorem accendere tali?
quidve mali fuerat nobis non esse creatis?

175 an, credo, in tenebris vita ac maerore iacebat,
donec diluxit rerum genitalis origo?

natus enim debet qui cumque est velle manere
in vita, donec retinebit blanda voluptas;
qui numquam vero vitae gustavit amorem

180 nec fuit in numero, quid obest non esse creatum?

exemplum porro gignundis rebus et ipsa
notities hominum divis unde insita primum est,
quid vellent facere ut scirent animoque viderent,
quoque modost umquam vis cognita principiorum

185 quidque inter sese permutato ordine possent.
si non ipsa dedit speciem natura creandi?

namque ita multa modis multis primordia rerum
ex infinito iam tempore percita plagis
ponderibusque suis consuerunt concita ferri

190 omnimodisque coire atque omnia pertemptare,
quae cumque inter se possint congressa creare,
ut non sit mirum, si in talis disposituras
deciderunt quoque et in talis venere meatus,
qualibus haec rerum geritur nunc summa novando.

195 Quod si iam rerum ignorem primordia quae sint,
hoc tamen ex ipsis caeli rationibus ausim
confirmare aliisque ex rebus reddere multis,
nequaquam nobis divinitus esse paratam
naturam rerum: tanta stat praedita culpa.

[164] and to invent and add other figments of the kind, Memmius, is all sheer folly.

For what advantage can our gratitude bestow on immortal and blessed beings, that for our sakes they should take in hand to administer aught? And what novel incident should have induced them hitherto at rest so long after to desire to change their former life? For it seems natural he should rejoice in a new state of things, whom old things annoy; but for him whom no ill has befallen in times gone by when he passed a pleasant existence, what could have kindled in such a one a love of change?

Did life lie groveling in darkness and sorrow, until the first dawn of the birth time of things?

Or what evil had it been for us never to have been born?

Whoever has been born must want to continue in life, so long as fond pleasure shall keep him; but for him who has never tasted the love, never been on the lists of life, what harm not to have been born?

Whence again was first implanted in the gods a pattern for begetting things in general as well as the preconception of what men are, so that they knew and saw in mind what they wanted to make? And in what way was the power of first-beginnings ever ascertained, and what they could effect by a change in their mutual arrangements, unless nature herself gave the model for making things?

For in such wise the first-beginnings of things many in number in many ways impelled by blows for infinite ages back and kept in motion by their own weights have been wont to be carried along and to unite in all manner of ways and thoroughly test every kind of production possible by their mutual combinations; that it is not strange if they have also fallen into arrangements and have come into courses like to those out of which this sum of things is now carried on by constant renewing.

But if I did not know what first-beginnings of things are, yet this judging by the very arrangements of heaven I would venture to affirm, and led by many other facts to maintain, that the nature of things has by no means been made for us by divine power:

200 principio quantum caeli tegit impetus ingens,
inde avidam partem montes silvaeque ferarum
possedere, tenent rupes vastaeque paludes
et mare, quod late terrarum distinet oras.
inde duas porro prope partis fervidus ardor
205 adsiduusque geli casus mortalibus aufert.
quod super est arvi, tamen id natura sua vi
sentibus obducat, ni vis humana resistat
vitai causa valido consueta bidenti
ingemere et terram pressis proscindere aratris.
210 si non fecundas vertentes vomere glebas

terraique solum subigentes cimus ad ortus.
 sponte sua nequeant liquidas existere in auras.
 et tamen inter dum magno quaesita labore
 cum iam per terras frondent atque omnia florent,
 215 aut nimiis torret fervoribus aetherius sol
 aut subiti peremunt imbris gelidaeque pruinae
 flabraque ventorum violento turbine vexant.
 praeterea genus horriferum natura ferarum
 humanae genti infestum terraque marique
 220 cur alit atque auget? cur anni tempora morbos
 adportant? quare mors inmatura vagatur?
 tum porro puer, ut saevis proiectus ab undis
 navita, nudus humi iacet infans indigus omni
 vitali auxilio, cum primum in luminis oras
 225 nixibus ex alvo matris natura profudit,
 vagituque locum lugubri complet, ut aequumst
 cui tantum in vita restet transire malorum.
 at variae crescunt pecudes armenta feraeque
 nec crepitacillis opus est nec cuiquam adhibendast
 230 almae nutricis blanda atque infracta loquella
 nec varias quaerunt vestes pro tempore caeli,
 denique non armis opus est, non moenibus altis,
 qui sua tutentur, quando omnibus omnia large
 tellus ipsa parit naturaque daedala rerum.
 235 Principio quoniam terrai corpus et umor
 aurarumque leves animae calidique vapores,
 e quibus haec rerum consistere summa videtur,
 omnia nativo ac mortali corpore constant,
 debet eodem omnis mundi natura putari.
 240 quippe etenim, quorum partis et membra videmus
 corpore nativo mortalibus esse figuris,

[199] so great are the defects with which it is encumbered.

In the first place of all, the space which the vast reach of heaven covers, a portion greedy mountains and forests of wild beasts have occupied, rocks and wasteful pools take up and the sea which holds wide apart the coasts of different lands.

Next, of nearly two thirds burning heat and the constant fall of frost rob mortals.

What is left for tillage, even that nature by its power would overrun with thorns, unless the force of man made head against it, accustomed for the sake of a livelihood to groan beneath the strong hoe and to cut through the earth by pressing down the plow.

Unless by turning up the fruitful clods with the share and laboring the soil

of the earth we stimulate things to rise, they could not spontaneously come up into the clear air; and even then sometimes when things earned with great toil now put forth their leaves over the lands and are all in blossom, either the ethereal sun bums them up with excessive heats or sudden rains and cold frosts cut them off, and the blasts of the winds waste them by a furious hurricane.

Again, why does nature give food and increase to the frightful race of wild beasts dangerous to mankind both by sea and land? Why do the seasons of the year bring diseases in their train? Why stalks abroad untimely death? Then, too the baby, like to a sailor cast away by the cruel waves, lies naked on the ground, speechless, wanting every furtherance of life, soon as nature by the throes of birth has shed him forth from his mother's womb into the borders of light: he fills the room with a rueful wading, as well he may whose destiny it is to go through in life so many ills.

But the different flocks herds and wild beasts grow up; they want no rattles; to none of them need be addressed the fond broken accents of the fostering nurse; they ask not different dresses according to the season; no nor do they want arms or lofty walls, whereby to protect their own, the earth itself and nature manifold in her works producing in plenty all things for all.

First of all, since the body of the earth and water and the light breath of air and burning heats, out of which this sum of things is seen to be formed, do all consist of a body that had a birth and is mortal, the whole nature of the world must be reckoned of a like body.

For those things whose parts and members we see to be of a body that had a birth and of forms that are mortal, we perceive to be likewise without exception mortal, and at the same time to have had a birth.

haec eadem ferme mortalia cernimus esse
et nativa simul. qua propter maxima mundi
cum videam membra ac partis consumpta regigni,
245 scire licet caeli quoque item terraeque fuisse
principiale aliquod tempus clademque futuram.
Illud in his rebus ne corripuisse rearis
me mihi, quod terram atque ignem mortalia sumpsit
esse neque umorem dubitavi aurasque perire
250 atque eadem gigni rursusque augescere dixi.
principio pars terrae non nulla, perusta
solibus adsiduis, multa pulsata pedum vi,
pulveris exhalat nebulam nubesque volantis,
quas validi toto dispergunt aëre venti.
255 pars etiam glebarum ad diluvium revocatur
imbribus et ripas radentia flumina rodunt.
praeterea pro parte sua, quod cumque alit auget,
redditur; et quoniam dubio procul esse videtur

omniparens eadem rerum commune sepulcrum.

260 ergo terra tibi libatur et aucta recrescit.

Quod super est, umore novo mare flumina fontes
semper abundare et latices manare perennis
nil opus est verbis: magnus decursus aquarum
undique declarat. sed primum quicquid aquai

265 tollitur in summaque fit ut nihil umor abundet,

partim quod validi verrentes aequora venti
deminuunt radiisque retexens aetherius sol,
partim quod super per terras diditur omnis;
percolatur enim virus retroque remanat

270 materies umoris et ad caput amnibus omnis
convenit, inde super terras fluit agmine dulci
qua via secta semel liquido pede detulit undas.

Aëra nunc igitur dicam, qui corpore toto
innumerabiliter privas mutatur in horas.

275 semper enim, quod cumque fluit de rebus, id omne
aëris in magnum fertur mare; qui nisi contra
corpora retribuatur rebus recreeturque fluentis,
omnia iam resoluta forent et in aëra versa.

haut igitur cessat gigni de rebus et in res

280 recidere, adsidue quoniam fluere omnia constat.

[242] Since therefore I see that the chiefest members and parts of the world are destroyed and begotten anew, I may be sure that for heaven and earth as well there has been a time of beginning and there will be a time of destruction.

And herein that you may not think I have unfairly seized on this point for myself, because I have assumed that earth and fire are mortal and have not doubted that water and air perish, and have said that these are likewise begotten and grow afresh, mark the proofs: First of all some portion of the earth, burnt up by constant suns, trampled by a multitude of feet, sends forth a cloud and flying eddies of dust, which the strong winds disperse over the whole air.

Part too of the soil is put underwater by rains, and rivers graze against and eat into the banks.

Again whatever increases something else is in its turn replenished; and since beyond a doubt earth the universal mother is found at the same time to be the general tomb of things, therefore you see she is lessened and increases and grows again.

Furthermore, that sea rivers fountains always stream over with new moisture and that waters well up without ceasing, it needs no words to prove: the great flow of waters from all sides clearly shows it.

But then the water on the surface is always taken off, and thus it is that on the whole there is no overflow, partly because the seas are lessened by the

strong winds sweeping over them and by the ethereal sun decomposing them with his rays; partly because the water is diffused below the surface over all lands; for the salt is strained off and the matter of liquid streams back again to the source and all meets together at the river-heads, and then flows over the lands in a fresh current, where a channel once scooped out has carried down the waters with liquid foot.

And next I will speak of the air which is changed over its whole body every hour in countless ways.

For whatever ebbs from things, is all borne always into the great sea of air; and unless it in return were to give back bodies to things and to recruit them as they ebb, all things ere now would have been dissolved and changed into air.

It therefore ceases not to be begotten from things and to go back into things, since it is a fact that all things constantly ebb.

Largus item liquidi fons luminis, aetherius sol,
inrigat adsidue caelum candore recenti
suppeditatque novo confestim lumine lumen.
nam primum quicquid fulgoris disperit ei,
285 quo cumque accidit. id licet hinc cognoscere possis,
quod simul ac primum nubes succedere soli
coepere et radios inter quasi rumpere lucis,
extemplo inferior pars horum disperit omnis
terraque inumbratur qua nimbi cumque feruntur;
290 ut noscas splendore novo res semper egere
et primum iactum fulgoris quemque perire
nec ratione alia res posse in sole videri,
perpetuo ni suppeditet lucis caput ipsum.
quin etiam nocturna tibi, terrestria quae sunt,
295 lumina, pendentes lychni claraeque coruscis
fulguribus pingues multa caligine taedae
consimili properant ratione, ardore ministro,
suppeditare novom lumen, tremere ignibus instant,
instant, nec loca lux inter quasi rupta relinquit:
300 usque adeo properanter ab omnibus ignibus ei
exitium celeri celeratur origine flammae.
sic igitur solem lunam stellasque putandum
ex alio atque alio lucem iactare subortu
et primum quicquid flammarum perdere semper,
305 inviolabilia haec ne credas forte vigere.
Denique non lapides quoque vinci cernis ab aevo,
non altas turris ruere et putrescere saxa,
non delubra deum simulacraque fessa fatisci
nec sanctum numen fati protollere finis

310 posse neque adversus naturae foedera niti?
denique non monimenta virum dilapsa videmus,
quaerere proporro, sibi cumque senescere credas,
non ruere avolsos silices a montibus altis
nec validas aevi vires perferre patique
315 finiti? neque enim caderent avolsa repente,
ex infinito quae tempore pertolerassent
omnia tormenta aetatis, privata fragore.
Denique iam tuere hoc, circum supraque quod omne
continet amplexu terram: si procreat ex se
320 omnia, quod quidam memorant, recipitque preempta,
totum nativum mortali corpore constat.
nam quod cumque alias ex se res auget alitque,
deminui debet, recreari, cum recipit res.

[280] Likewise, the abundant source of clear light, the ethereal sun, constantly floods heaven with fresh brightness and supplies the place of light on the instant by new light; for every previous emission of brightness is quite lost to it, wherever it falls.

This you may know from the following examples: as soon as ever clouds begin to pass below the sun and to break off so to say the rays of light, forthwith their lower part is wholly lost, and the earth is overshadowed wherever the clouds pass over; so that you may know that things constantly require new irradiation and that all the preceding emissions of light are lost, and in no other way can things be seen in the sun, unless the fountain head of light itself send a supply.

Moreover, you see, nightly lights which belong to earth, such as hanging lamps and torches bright with darting flames, hasten in like fashion amid great darkness with ministering heat to supply new light; are eager to bicker with fires, are eager; nor is the light ever broken off nor does it quit the spots illuminated: with such suddenness is its destruction concealed by the swift birth of flame from all the fires at once.

In the same way then we must believe that sun moon and stars emit light from fresh and ever fresh supplies rising up, and always lose every previous discharge of flames; that you may not haply believe that these flourish indestructible.

Again see you not that even stones are conquered by time, that high towers fall and rocks molder away, that shrines and idols of gods are worn out with decay, and that the holy divinity cannot prolong the bounds of fate or struggle against the fixed laws of nature?

Then see we not the monuments of men, fallen to ruin, ask for themselves as well whether you'd believe that they decay with years? See we not basalt rocks tumble down riven away from high mountains and unable to endure and suffer the strong might of finite age? Surely they would never fall suddenly

thus riven away, if for infinite time past they had held out against all the batteries of age without a crash.

Again gaze on this, which about and above holds in its embrace all the earth: if it begets all things out of itself, as some say, and takes them back when they are destroyed, then the whole of it has had a birth and is of a mortal body; for whatever gives increase and food out of itself to other things must be lessened;

Praeterea si nulla fuit genitalis origo

325 terrarum et caeli semperque aeterna fuere,
cur supera bellum Thebanum et funera Troiae
non alias alii quoque res cecinere poëtae?
quo tot facta virum totiens cecidere neque usquam
aeternis famae monumentis insita florent?

330 verum, ut opinor, habet novitatem summa recensque
naturast mundi neque pridem exordia cepit.

quare etiam quaedam nunc artes expoliuntur,
nunc etiam augescunt; nunc addita navigiis sunt
multa, modo organici melicos peperere sonores,
335 denique natura haec rerum ratioque repertast
nuper, et hanc primus cum primis ipse repertus
nunc ego sum in patrias qui possim vertere voces.

Quod si forte fuisse ante hac eadem omnia credis,
sed periisse hominum torrenti saecula vapore,

340 aut cecidisse urbis magno vexamine mundi,
aut ex imbribus adsiduis exisse rapaces
per terras amnes atque oppida coperuisse.

tanto quique magis victus fateare necessest
exitium quoque terrarum caelique futurum;

345 nam cum res tantis morbis tantisque periclis
temptarentur, ibi si tristior incubuisset
causa, darent late cladem magnasque ruinas.

nec ratione alia mortales esse videmur,
inter nos nisi quod morbis aegrescimus isdem

350 atque illi quos a vita natura removit.

Praeterea quae cumque manent aeterna necessust
aut, quia sunt solido cum corpore, respuere ictus
nec penetrare pati sibi quicquam quod queat artas
dissociare intus partis, ut materiai

355 corpora sunt, quorum naturam ostendimus ante,
aut ideo durare aetatem posse per omnem,
plagarum quia sunt expertia, sicut inane est,
quod manet intactum neque ab ictu fungitur hilum,
aut etiam quia nulla loci sit copia circum,

360 quo quasi res possint discedere dissoluique,
sicut summarum summa est aeterna, neque extra
qui locus est quo dissiliant neque corpora sunt quae
possint incidere et valida dissolvere plaga.

[323] and must be replenished, when it takes things back.

Again, if there was no birth-time of earth and heaven and they have been from everlasting, why before the Theban war and the destruction of Troy have not other poets as well sung other themes?

Whither have so many deeds of men so often passed away, why live they nowhere embodied in lasting records of fame? The truth methinks is that the sum has but a recent date and the nature of the world is new and has but lately had its commencement.

Wherefore even now some arts are receiving their last polish, some are even in course of growth: just now many improvements have been made in ships; only yesterday musicians have given birth to tuneful melodies; then too this nature or system of things has been discovered lately, and I the very first of all have only now been found able to transfer it into native words.

But if haply you believe that before this all things have existed just the same, but that the generations of men have perished by burning heat, or that cities have fallen by some great concussion of the world, or that after constant rains devouring rivers have gone forth over the earth and havewhelmed towns, so much the more you must yield and admit that there will be entire destruction too of earth and heaven; for when things were tried by so great distempers and so great dangers, at that time had a more disastrous cause pressed upon them, they would far and wide have gone to destruction and mighty ruin.

And in no other way are we proved to be mortals, except because we all alike in turn fall sick of the same diseases which those had whom nature has withdrawn from life.

Again whatever things last for ever, must either, because they are of solid body, repel strokes and not suffer aught to pass into them, sufficient to disunite the closely massed parts within: such are the bodies of matter whose nature we have shown before: or they must be able to endure through all time for this reason, because they are exempt from blows, as void is which remains untouched and suffers not a jot from any stroke; or else because there is no extent of room around, into which things so to say may depart and be broken up: in this way the sum of sums is eternal and there is no place outside into which things may spring asunder, nor are there anybodies which can fall upon them and dissolve them by a powerful blow.

at neque, uti docui, solido cum corpore mundi

365 naturast, quoniam admixtumst in rebus inane,
nec tamen est ut inane, neque autem corpora desunt,
ex infinito quae possint forte coorta

corruiere hanc rerum violento turbine summam
 aut aliam quamvis cladem inportare pericli,
 370 nec porro natura loci spatiumque profundi
 deficit, exspargi quo possint moenia mundi,
 aut alia quavis possunt vi pulsa perire.
 haut igitur leti praeclusa est ianua caelo
 nec soli terraeque neque altis aequoris undis,
 375 sed patet immani et vasto respectat hiatu.
 quare etiam nativa necessumst confiteare
 haec eadem; neque enim, mortali corpore quae sunt,
 ex infinito iam tempore adhuc potuissent
 immensi validas aevi contemnere vires.
 380 Denique tantopere inter se cum maxima mundi
 pugnent membra, pio nequaquam concita bello,
 nonne vides aliquam longi certaminis ollis
 posse dari finem, vel cum sol et vapor omnis
 omnibus epotis umoribus exsuperarint?
 385 quod facere intendunt, neque adhuc conata patrantur;
 tantum suppeditant amnes ultraque minantur
 omnia diluviare ex alto gurgite ponti:
 ne quiquam, quoniam verrentes aequora venti
 deminuunt radiisque retexens aetherius sol,
 390 et siccare prius confidunt omnia posse
 quam liquor incepti possit contingere finem.
 tantum spirantes aequo certamine bellum
 magnis inter se de rebus cernere certant,
 cum semel interea fuerit superantior ignis
 395 et semel, ut fama est, umor regnarit in arvis.
 ignis enim superavit et ambiens multa perussit,
 avia cum Phaethonta rapax vis solis equorum
 aethere raptavit toto terrasque per omnis.
 at pater omnipotens ira tum percitus acri
 400 magnanimum Phaethonta repentis fulminis ictu
 deturbavit equis in terram, Solque cadenti
 obuius aeternam suscepit lampada mundi
 disiectosque redegit equos iunxitque trementis,
 inde suum per iter recreavit cuncta gubernans,
 405 scilicet ut veteres Graium cecinere poëtae.

[364] But the nature of the world, as I have shown, is neither of solid body, since void is mixed up in things, nor is it again like void, nor is there lack of bodies that may haply rise up in mass out of the infinite and overthrow this sum of things with furious tornado or bring upon them some other perilous disaster; nor further is the nature of room or the space of deep void wanting,

into which the walls of the world may be scattered abroad; or they may be assailed and perish by some other force.

Therefore the gate of death is not closed against heaven or sun or earth or the deep waters of the sea, but stands open and looks towards them with huge wide-gaping maw.

And therefore also you must admit that these things likewise had a birth; for things which are of mortal body could not for an infinite time back up to the present have been able to set at naught the puissant strength of immeasurable age.

Again since the chiefest members of the world fight so hotly together, fiercely stirred by no hallowed civil warfare, see you not that some limit may be set to their long struggle?

Either when the sun and all heat shall have drunk up all the waters and gotten the mastery: this they are ever striving to do, but as yet are unable to accomplish their endeavors: such abundant supplies the rivers furnish, and threaten to turn aggressors and flood all things with a deluge from the deep gulfs of ocean; all in vain, since the winds sweeping over the seas and the ethereal sun decomposing them with his rays do lessen them, and trust to be able to dry all things up before water can attain the end of its endeavor.

Such a war do they breathe out with undecided issue, and strive with each other to determine it for mighty ends; though once by the way fire got the upper hand and once, as the story goes, water reigned paramount in the fields.

Fire gained the mastery and licked and burnt up many things, when the headstrong might of the horses of the sun dashed from the course and hurried Phaethon through the whole sky and over all lands.

But the almighty father, stirred then to fierce wrath, with a sudden thunder stroke dashed Phaethon down from his horses to earth, and the sun meeting him as he fell caught from him the ever-burning lamp of the world and got in hand the scattered steeds and yoked them shaking all over; then guided them on their proper course and gave fresh life to all things.

quod procul a vera nimis est ratione repulsum.

ignis enim superare potest ubi material

ex infinito sunt corpora plura coorta;

inde cadunt vires aliqua ratione revictae,

⁴¹⁰ aut pereunt res exustae torrentibus auris.

umor item quondam coepit superare coortus,

ut fama est, hominum vitas quando obruit undis;

inde ubi vis aliqua ratione aversa recessit,

ex infinito fuerat quae cumque coorta,

⁴¹⁵ constiterunt imbres et flumina vim minuerunt.

Sed quibus ille modis coniectus material

fundarit terram et caelum pontique profunda,

solis lunai cursus, ex ordine ponam.

nam certe neque consilio primordia rerum
420 ordine se suo quaeque sagaci mente locarunt
nec quos quaeque darent motus pepigere profecto;
sed quia multa modis multis primordia rerum
ex infinito iam tempore percita plagis
ponderibusque suis consuerunt concita ferri
425 omnimodisque coire atque omnia pertemptare,
quae cumque inter se possent congressa creare,
propterea fit uti magnum volgata per aevom
omnigenus coetus et motus experiundo
tandem conveniant ea quae coniecta repente
430 magnarum rerum fiunt exordia saepe,
terrai maris et caeli generisque animantum.
Hic neque tum solis rota cerni lumine largo
altivolans poterat nec magni sidera mundi
nec mare nec caelum nec denique terra neque aër
435 nec similis nostris rebus res ulla videri,
sed nova tempestas quaedam molesque coorta.
diffugere inde loci partes coepere paresque
cum paribus iungi res et discludere mundum
membraque dividere et magnas disponere partes
440 omnigenis e principiis, discordia quorum
intervalla vias conexus pondera plagas
concursus motus turbabat proelia miscens
propter dissimilis formas variasque figuras,
quod non omnia sic poterant coniuncta manere
445 nec motus inter sese dare convenientis,
hoc est, a terris altum secernere caelum,
et sorsum mare, uti secreto umore pateret,
seorsus item puri secretique aetheris ignes.

[405] Thus to wit have the old poets of the Greeks sung; though it is all too widely at variance with true reason.

Fire may gain the mastery when more bodies of matter than usual have gathered themselves up out of the infinite; and then its powers decay, vanquished in some way or other, or else things perish burnt up by the torrid air.

Water too of yore gathered itself and began to get the mastery, as the story goes, when it whelmed many cities of men; and then when all that force that had gathered itself up out of the infinite, by some means or other was turned aside and withdrew, the rains were stayed and the rivers abated their fury.

But in what ways yon concourse of matter founded earth and heaven and the deeps of the sea, the courses of the sun and moon, I will next in order describe.

For verily not by design did the first-beginnings of things station themselves each in its right place by keen intelligence, nor did they bargain sooth to say what motions each should assume, but because the first-beginnings of things many in number in many ways impelled by blows for infinite ages back and kept in motion by their own weights have been wont to be carried along and to unite in all manner of ways and thoroughly to test every kind of production possible by their mutual combinations, therefore it is that spread abroad through great time after trying unions and motions of every kind they at length meet together in those masses which suddenly brought together become often the rudiments of great things, of earth sea and heaven and the race of living things.

At this time then neither could the sun's disk be discerned flying aloft with its abundant light, nor the stars of great ether, nor sea nor heaven, no nor earth nor air, nor could any thing be seen like to our things, but only a strange stormy crisis and medley, gathered together out of first-beginnings of every kind, whose state of discord joining battle disordered their interspaces passages, connections, weights, blows, clashings, and motions, because by reason of their unlike forms and varied shapes they could not all remain thus joined together nor fall into mutually harmonious motions.

Then next the several parts began to fly asunder and things to be joined like with like and to mark off the world and portion out its members and arrange its mighty parts, that is to say, to separate high heaven from earth, and let the sea spread itself out apart with its unmixed water, and likewise let the fires of ether spread apart pure and unmixed.

Quippe etenim primum terrai corpora quaeque,
450 propterea quod erant gravia et perplexa, coibant
in medio atque imas capiebant omnia sedes;
quae quanto magis inter se perplexa coibant,
tam magis expressere ea quae mare sidera solem
lunamque efficerent et magni moenia mundi;
455 omnia enim magis haec e levibus atque rutundis
seminibus multoque minoribus sunt elementis
quam tellus. ideo per rara foramina terrae
partibus erumpens primus se sustulit aether
ignifer et multos secum levis abstulit ignis,
460 non alia longe ratione ac saepe videmus,
aurea cum primum gemmantis rore per herbas
matutina rubent radiati lumina solis
exhalantque lacus nebulam fluvii perennes
ipsaque ut inter dum tellus fumare videtur;
465 omnia quae sursum cum conciliantur, in alto
corpore concreto subtexunt nubila caelum.
sic igitur tum se levis ac diffusilis aether

corpore concreto circum datus undique saepsit
et late diffusus in omnis undique partis
470 omnia sic avido complexu cetera saepsit.
hunc exordia sunt solis lunaeque secuta,
interutrasque globi quorum vertuntur in auris;
quae neque terra sibi adscivit nec maximus aether,
quod neque tam fuerunt gravia ut depressa sederent,
475 nec levia ut possent per summas labier oras,
et tamen interutrasque ita sunt, ut corpora viva
versent et partes ut mundi totius extent;
quod genus in nobis quaedam licet in statione
membra manere, tamen cum sint ea quae moveantur.
480 his igitur rebus retractis terra repente,
maxuma qua nunc se ponti plaga caerulea tendit,
succidit et salso suffudit gurgite fossas.
inque dies quanto circum magis aetheris aestus
et radii solis cogeant undique terram
485 verberibus crebris extrema ad limina fartam
in medio ut propulsa suo condensa coiret,
tam magis expressus salsus de corpore sudor
augebat mare manando camposque natantis,
et tanto magis illa foras elapsa volabant
490 corpora multa vaporis et aëris altaque caeli
densabant procul a terris fulgentia templa.

[449] For first the several bodies of earth, because they were heavy and closely entangled, met together in the middle and took up all of them the lowest positions; and the more they got entangled and the closer their union, the more they squeezed out those particles which were to make up sea stars sun and moon and the walls of the great world.

All these are of smooth and round seeds and of much smaller elements than the earth.

Therefore the fire-laden ether first burst out from the different parts of the earth through all the porous openings and lightly bore off with itself many fires; much in the same way as we often see, so soon as the morning light of the beaming sun blushes golden over the grass jeweled with dew, and the pools and the ever-running rivers exhale a mist, and even as the earth itself is sometimes seen to smoke; and when all these are gathered together aloft, then do clouds on high with a now cohering body weave a covering beneath heaven.

In this way therefore then the light and expansive ether with its now cohering body swept round and arched itself on all sides and expanding widely in all directions round in this way fenced all other things in with its greedy grasp.

After it followed the rudiments of sun and moon, whose spheres turn round in air midway between earth and ether: these neither earth has taken unto itself nor greatest ether, because they were neither heavy enough to sink and settle down nor light enough to glide along the uppermost borders; they yet however are so placed between the two as to wheel along their life-like bodies and still to be parts of the whole world; just as in us some members may be at rest, while others at the same time are in motion.

These things then being withdrawn, the earth in those parts where the vast azure level of ocean now spreads, in a moment sank in and drenched with salt flood the hollows.

At every day the more the heats of ether round and the rays of the sun on all sides compressed the earth into a close mass by oft-repeated blows on all its outer edges, so that thus buffeted it was condensed and drawn together about its center, ever the more did the salt sweat squeezed out of its body increase by its oozings the sea and floating fields, and ever the more did those many bodies of heat and air escape and fly abroad and condense far away from earth the high glittering quarters of heaven.

sidebant campi, crescebant montibus altis
ascensus; neque enim poterant subsidere saxa
nec pariter tantundem omnes succumbere partis.
495 Sic igitur terrae concreto corpore pondus
constitit atque omnis mundi quasi limus in imum
confluxit gravis et subsedit funditus ut faex;
inde mare, inde aër, inde aether ignifer ipse
corporibus liquidis sunt omnia pura relictæ
500 et leviora aliis alia, et liquidissimus aether
atque levissimus aërias super influit auras
nec liquidum corpus turbantibus aëris auris
commiscet; sinit haec violentis omnia verti
turbiniis, sinit incertis turbare procellis,
505 ipse suos ignis certo fert impete labens.
nam modice fluere atque uno posse aethera nisu
significat Pontos, mare certo quod fluit aestu
unum labendi conservans usque tenorem.
Motibus astrorum nunc quae sit causa canamus.
510 principio magnus caeli si vortitur orbis,
ex utraque polum parti premere aëra nobis
dicendum est extraque tenere et claudere utrimque;
inde alium supra fluere atque intendere eodem
quo volvenda micant aeterni sidera mundi;
515 aut alium supter, contra qui subvehat orbem,
ut fluvios versare rotas atque austrā videmus.
est etiam quoque uti possit caelum omne manere

in statione, tamen cum lucida signa ferantur,
sive quod inclusi rapidi sunt aetheris aestus
520 quaerentesque viam circum versantur et ignes
passim per caeli volvunt summania templa,
sive aliunde fluens alicunde extrinsecus aër
versat agens ignis, sive ipsi serpere possunt,
quo cuiusque cibus vocat atque invitat euntis,
525 flammea per caelum pascentis corpora passim.
nam quid in hoc mundo sit eorum ponere certum
difficilest; sed quid possit fiatque per omne
in variis mundis varia ratione creatis,
id doceo plurisque sequor disponere causas,
530 motibus astrorum quae possint esse per omne;
e quibus una tamen sit et haec quoque causa necessesse,
quae vegeat motum signis; sed quae sit earum
praecipere haud quaquamst pedetemptim progredientis.

[492] The plains sank down, the high hills grew in elevation; for the rocks could not settle down nor all the parts sink to one uniform level.

Thus then the ponderous mass of earth was formed with close-cohering body and all the slime of the world so to speak slid down by its weight to the lowest point and settled at the bottom like dregs.

Then the sea, then the air, then the fire-laden ether itself, all are left unmixed with their clear bodies; and some are lighter than others, and clearest and lightest of all ether floats upon the airy currents, and blends not its clear body with the troubled airs; it suffers all these things below to be upset with furious hurricanes, suffer them to be troubled by wayward storms; while it carries along its own fires gliding with a changeless onward sweep.

For that ether may stream on gently and with one uniform effort the Pontos shows, a sea which streams with a changeless current, ever preserving one uniform gliding course.

Let us now sing what causes the motions of the stars.

In the first place, if the great sphere of heaven revolves, we must say that an air presses on the pole at each end and confines it on the outside and closes it in at both ends; and then that a third air streams above and moves in the same direction in which roll on as they shine the stars of the eternal world; or else that this third air streams below in order to carry up the sphere in the contrary direction; just as we see rivers turn wheels and water-scoops.

It is likewise quite possible too that all the heaven remains at rest, while at the same time the glittering signs are carried on; either because rapid heats of ether are shut in and whirl round while seeking a way out and roll their fires in all directions through heaven's Summanian quarters; or else an air streaming from some part from another source outside drives and whirls the fires; or else they may glide on of themselves going whithersoever the food of each calls

and invites them, feeding their flaming bodies everywhere throughout heaven.

For which of these causes is in operation in this world, it is not easy to affirm for certain; but what can be and is done throughout the universe in various worlds formed on various plans, this I teach, and I go on to set forth several causes which may exist throughout the universe for the motions of stars; one of which however must in this world also be the cause that imparts lively motion, to the signs; but to dictate which of them it is, is by no means the duty of the man who advances step by step.

Terraque ut in media mundi regione quiescat,
535 evanescere paulatim et decrescere pondus
convenit atque aliam naturam sup̄ter habere
ex ineunte aevo coniunctam atque uniter aptam
partibus aëriis mundi, quibus insita vivit.
propterea non est oneri neque deprimit auras,
540 ut sua cuique homini nullo sunt pondere membra
nec caput est oneri collo nec denique totum
corporis in pedibus pondus sentimus inesse;
at quae cumque foris veniunt inpostaque nobis
pondera sunt laedunt, permulto saepe minora.
545 usque adeo magni refert quid quaeque queat res.
sic igitur tellus non est aliena repente
allata atque auris aliunde obiecta alienis,
sed pariter prima concepta ab origine mundi
certaque pars eius, quasi nobis membra videntur.
550 Praeterea grandi tonitru concussa repente
terra supra quae se sunt concutit omnia motu;
quod facere haut ulla posset ratione, nisi esset
partibus aëriis mundi caeloque revincta;
nam communibus inter se radicibus haerent
555 ex ineunte aevo coniuncta atque uniter aucta.
Nonne vides etiam quam magno pondere nobis
sustineat corpus tenuissima vis animai,
propterea quia tam coniuncta atque uniter apta est?
Denique iam saltu pernici tollere corpus
560 quid potis est nisi vis animae, quae membra gubernat?
iamne vides quantum tenuis natura valere
possit, ubi est coniuncta gravi cum corpore, ut aër
coniunctus terris et nobis est animi vis?
Nec nimio solis maior rota nec minor ardor
565 esse potest, nostris quam sensibus esse videtur.
nam quibus e spatiis cumque ignes lumina possunt
adiicere et calidum membris adflare vaporem,
nil magnis intervallis de corpore libant

flammarum, nihil ad speciem est contractior ignis.
570 proinde, calor quoniam solis lumenque profusum
perveniant nostros ad sensus et loca fulgent,
forma quoque hinc solis debet filumque videri,
nil adeo ut possis plus aut minus addere vere.

[534] And in order that the earth may rest in the middle of the world, it is proper that its weight should gradually pass away and be lessened, and that it should have another nature underneath it conjoined from the beginning of its existence and formed into one being with the airy portions of the world in which it is embodied and lives.

For this reason it is no burden and does not weigh down the air; just as his limbs are of no weight to a man nor is his head a burden to his neck, nor do we feel that the whole weight of the body rests on the feet; but whatever weights come from without and are laid upon us, hurt us though they are often very much smaller: of such great moment it is what function each thing has to perform.

Thus then the earth is not an alien body suddenly brought in and forced from some other quarter on air alien to it, but was conceived together with it at the first birth of the world and is a fixed portion of that world, just as our limbs are seen to be to us.

Again the earth when suddenly shaken by loud thunder shakes by its motion all the things which are above it; and this it could in no wise do, unless it had been fast bound with the airy portions of the world and with heaven.

For the earth and they cohere with one another by common roots, conjoined and formed into a single being from the beginning of their existence.

See you not too that great as is the weight of our body, the force of the soul, though of the extremest fineness, supports it, because it is so closely conjoined and formed into a single being with it?

Then too what is able to lift the body with a nimble bound save the force of the mind which guides the limbs?

Now do you see what power a subtle nature may have, when it is conjoined with a heavy body, as the air is conjoined with the earth and the force of the mind in us?

Again, the disk of the sun cannot be much larger nor its body of heat much smaller, than they appear to be to our senses.

For from whatever distances fires can reach us with their light and breathe on our limbs burning heat, those distances take away nothing by such spaces between from the body of the flames, the fire is not in the least narrowed in appearance.

Therefore since the heat of the sun and the light which it sheds reach our senses and stroke the proper places, the form too and size of the sun must be seen from this earth in their real dimensions, so that you may not add anything

whatever more or less.

perveniunt nostros ad sensus et loca fulgent
575 lunaque sive notho fertur loca lumine lustrans,
sive suam proprio iactat de corpore lucem,
quidquid id est, nihilo fertur maiore figura
quam, nostris oculis qua cernimus, esse videtur.
nam prius omnia, quae longe semota tuemur
580 aëra per multum, specie confusa videntur
quam minui filum. quapropter luna necesse est,
quandoquidem claram speciem certamque figuram
praebet, ut est oris extremis cumque notata,
quanta quoquest, tanta hinc nobis videatur in alto.
585 postremo quos cumque vides hinc aetheris ignes,
scire licet perquam pauxillo posse minores
esse vel exigua maioris parte brevique.
quandoquidem quos cumque in terris cernimus ignes,
dum tremor et clarus dum cernitur ardor eorum,
590 perparvom quiddam inter dum mutare videntur
alteram utram in partem filum, quo longius absunt.
Illud item non est mirandum, qua ratione
tantulus ille queat tantum sol mittere lumen,
quod maria ac terras omnis caelumque rigando
595 compleat et calido perfundat cuncta vapore.
quanta quoquest tanta hinc nobis videatur in alto
nam licet hinc mundi patefactum totius unum
largifluum fontem scatere atque erumpere lumen,
ex omni mundo quia sic elementa vaporis
600 undique conveniunt et sic coniectus eorum
confluit, ex uno capite hic ut profluat ardor.
nonne vides etiam quam late parvus aquai
prata riget fons inter dum campisque redundet?
est etiam quoque uti non magno solis ab igni
605 aëra percipiat calidis fervoribus ardor,
opportunos ita est si forte et idoneus aër,
ut queat accendi parvis ardoribus ictus;
quod genus inter dum segetes stipulamque videmus
accidere ex una scintilla incendia passim.
610 forsitan et rosea sol alte lampade lucens
possideat multum caecis fervoribus ignem
circum se, nullo qui sit fulgore notatus,
aestifer ut tantum radiorum exaugeat ictum.

[573] And whether the moon as it is borne on illuminates places with a borrowed light, or emits its own light from its own body, whatever that is, the

form with which it is thus borne on is not at all larger than the one which it presents to our eyes seems to us to be.

For all things which we see at a great distance through much air look dimmed in appearance before their size is diminished.

Therefore since the moon presents a bright aspect and well-defined form, it must be seen on high by us from this earth precisely such as it is in the outline which defines it, and of the size it actually is.

Lastly in the case of all those fires of ether which you observe from this earth, since in the case of fires which we see here on earth, so long as their flickering is distinct, so long as their heat is perceived, their size is seen sometimes to change to a very very small extent either way, according to the distance at which they are, you may infer that the fires of ether may be smaller than they look in an extremely minute degree or larger by a very small and insignificant fraction.

This likewise need not excite wonder, how it is that so small a body as yon sun can emit so great a light, enough to flood completely seas and all lands and heaven and to steep all things in its burning heat.

It well may be that a single spring for the whole world may open up from this spot and gush out in plenteous stream and shoot forth light, because elements of heat meet together from all sides out of the whole world in such manner and the mass of them thrown together streams to a point in such manner, that this heat wells forth from a single source.

See you not too what a breadth of meadowland a small spring of water sometimes floods, streaming out over the fields?

It is likewise possible that heat from the sun's flame though not at all great may infect the whole air with fervent fires, if haply the air is in a suitable and susceptible state, so that it can be kindled when struck by small bodies of heat; thus we see sometimes a general conflagration from a single spark catch fields of corn and stubble.

Perhaps too the sun as he shines aloft with rosy lamp has round about him much fire with heats that are not visible, and thus the fire may be marked by no radiance, so that fraught with heat it increases to such a degree the stroke of the rays.

Nec ratio solis simplex et recta patescit,

615 quo pacto aestivis e partibus aegocerotis

brumalis adeat flexus atque inde revertens

canceris ut vertat metas ad solstitialis,

lunaque mensibus id spatium videatur obire,

annua sol in quo consumit tempora cursu.

620 non, inquam, simplex his rebus reddita causast.

nam fieri vel cum primis id posse videtur,

Democriti quod sancta viri sententia ponit,

quanto quaeque magis sint terram sidera propter,

tanto posse minus cum caeli turbine ferri;
625 evanescere enim rapidas illius et acris
imminui sup̄ter viris, ideoque relinqui
paulatim solem cum posterioribus signis,
inferior multo quod sit quam fervida signa.
et magis hoc lunam: quanto demissior eius
630 cursus abest procul a caelo terrisque propinquat,
tanto posse minus cum signis tendere cursum.
flaccidiore etiam quanto iam turbine fertur
inferior quam sol, tanto magis omnia signa
hanc adipiscuntur circum praeterque feruntur.
635 propterea fit ut haec ad signum quodque reverti
mobilius videatur, ad hanc quia signa revisunt.
fit quoque ut e mundi transversis partibus aër
alternis certo fluere alter tempore possit,
qui queat aestivis solem detrudere signis
640 brumalis usque ad flexus gelidumque rigorem,
et qui reiciat gelidis a frigoris umbris
aestiferas usque in partis et fervida signa.
et ratione pari lunam stellasque putandumst,
quae volvunt magnos in magnis orbibus annos,
645 aëribus posse alternis e partibus ire.
nonne vides etiam diversis nubila ventis
diversas ire in partis inferna supernis?
qui minus illa queant per magnos aetheris orbis
aestibus inter se diversis sidera ferri?
650 At nox obruit ingenti caligine terras,
aut ubi de longo cursu sol ultima caeli
impulit atque suos efflavit languidus ignis
concussos itere et labefactos aëre multo,
aut quia sub terras cursum convortere cogit

[615] Nor with regard to the sun is there one single explanation, certain and manifest, of the way in which he passes from his summer positions to the midwinter turning-point of Capricorn and then coming back from thence bends his course to the solstitial goal of cancer, and how the moon is seen once a month to pass over that space, in traversing which the sun spends the period of a year.

No single plain cause, I say, has been assigned for these things.

It seems highly probable that that may be the truth which the revered judgment of the worthy man Democritus maintains: the nearer the different constellations are to the earth, the less they can be carried along with the whirl of heaven; for the velocity of its force, he says, passes away and the intensity diminishes in the lower parts, and therefore the sun is gradually left behind

with the rearward signs, because he is much lower than the burning signs.

And the moon more than the sun: the lower her path is and the more distant she is from heaven and the nearer she approaches to earth, the less she can keep pace with the signs.

For the fainter the whirl is in which she is borne along, being as she is lower than the sun, so much the more all the signs around overtake and pass her.

Therefore it is that she appears to come back to every sign more quickly, because the signs go more quickly back to her.

It is quite possible too that from quarters of the world crossing the sun's path two airs may stream each in its turn at a fixed time; one of which may force the sun away from the summer signs so far as his midwinter turning-point and freezing cold, and the other may force him back from the freezing shades of cold as far as the heat-laden quarters and burning signs.

And in like manner we must suppose that the moon, and the stars which make revolutions of great years in great orbits may pass by means of airs from opposite quarters in turn.

See you not too that clouds from contrary winds pass in contrary directions, the upper in a contrary way to the lower?

Why may not yon stars just as well be borne on through their great orbits in either by currents contrary one to the other?

But night buries the earth in thick darkness, either when the sun after his long course has struck upon the utmost parts of heaven and now exhausted has blown forth all his fires shaken by their journey and weakened by passing through much air:

655 vis eadem, supra quae terras pertulit orbem.

Tempore item certo roseam Matuta per oras

aetheris auroram differt et lumina pandit,

aut quia sol idem, sub terras ille revertens,

anticipat caelum radiis accendere temptans,

660 aut quia conveniunt ignes et semina multa

confluere ardoris consuerunt tempore certo,

quae faciunt solis nova semper lumina gigni;

quod genus Idaeis fama est e montibus altis

dispersos ignis orienti lumine cerni,

665 inde coire globum quasi in unum et conficere orbem.

nec tamen illud in his rebus mirabile debet

esse, quod haec ignis tam certo tempore possint

semina confluere et solis reparare nitorem.

multa videmus enim, certo quae tempore fiunt

670 omnibus in rebus. florescunt tempore certo

arbusta et certo dimittunt tempore florem.

nec minus in certo dentes cadere imperat aetas

tempore et inpubem molli pubescere veste
et pariter mollem malis demittere barbam.
675 fulmina postremo nix imbres nubila venti
non nimis incertis fiunt in partibus anni.
namque ubi sic fuerunt causarum exordia prima
atque ita res mundi cecidere ab origine prima,
consequo quoque iam redeunt ex ordine certo.
680 Crescere itemque dies licet et tabescere noctes,
et minui luces, cum sumant augmina noctis,
aut quia sol idem sub terras atque superne
imparibus currens amfractibus aetheris oras
partit et in partis non aequas dividit orbem,
685 et quod ab alterutra detraxit parte, reponit
eius in adversa tanto plus parte relatus,
donec ad id signum caeli pervenit, ubi anni
nodus nocturnas exaequat lucibus umbras;
nam medio cursu flatus aquilonis et austri
690 distinet aequato caelum discrimine metas
propter signiferi posituram totius orbis,
annua sol in quo concludit tempora serpens,
obliquo terras et caelum lumine lustrans,
ut ratio declarat eorum qui loca caeli
695 omnia dispositis signis ornata notarunt.

[654] or else because the same force which has carried on his orb above the earth, compels him to change his course and pass below the earth.

At a fixed time too Matuta spreads rosy morning over the borders of ether and opens up her light, either because the same sun, coming back below the earth, seizes heaven before his time trying to kindle it with his rays; or because fires meet together and many seeds of heat are accustomed to stream together at a fixed time, which cause new sunlight to be born every day.

Thus they tell that from the high mountains of Ida scattered fires are seen at day-break, that these then unite as it were into a single ball and make up an orb.

And herein it ought to cause no surprise that these seeds of fire stream together at a time so surely fixed and reproduce the radiance of the sun.

For we see many occurrences which take place at a fixed time in all things.

At a fixed time trees blossom and at a fixed time shed their blossoms; and at a time no less surely fixed age bids the teeth be shed and the boy put on the soft dress of puberty and let a soft beard fall down equally from each cheek.

Lastly lightnings, snow, rains, clouds, and winds take place at not very irregular seasons of year.

For where causes from their very first beginnings have been in this way and things have thus fallen out from the first birth of the world, in due

sequence too they now come round after a fixed order.

Likewise days may lengthen and nights wane, and days shorten when the nights receive increase, either because the same sun running his course below the earth and above in curves of unlike length parts the borders of ether and divides his orbit into unequal halves; and as he comes round adds on in the opposite half just as much as he has subtracted from the other of the two halves, until he has arrived at that sign of heaven, where the node of the year makes the shades of night of the same length as the daylight.

For when the sun's course lies midway between the blast of the north and of the south, heaven keeps his two goals apart at distances now rendered exactly equal on account of the position of the whole starry circle, in gliding through which the sun takes up the period of a year, lighting with slanting rays earth and heaven; as is clearly shown by the plans of those who have mapped out all the quarters of heaven as they are set off with their array of signs.

aut quia crassior est certis in partibus aër,
sub terris ideo tremulum iubar haesitat ignis
nec penetrare potest facile atque emergere ad ortus;
propterea noctes hiberno tempore longae

700 cessant, dum veniat radiatum insigne diei.

aut etiam, quia sic alternis partibus anni
tardius et citius consuerunt confluere ignes,
qui faciunt solem certa de surgere parte,
propterea fit uti videantur dicere verum.

705 Luna potest solis radiis percussa nitere
inque dies magis id lumen convertere nobis
ad speciem, quantum solis secedit ab orbi,
donique eum contra pleno bene lumine fulsit
atque oriens obitus eius super edita vidit;

710 inde minutatim retro quasi condere lumen
debet item, quanto propius iam solis ad ignem
labitur ex alia signorum parte per orbem;
ut faciunt, lunam qui fingunt esse pilai
consimilem cursusque viam sub sole tenere.

715 est etiam quare proprio cum lumine possit
volvier et varias splendoris reddere formas;
corpus enim licet esse aliud, quod fertur et una
labitur omnimodis occursans officiensque,
nec potis est cerni, quia cassum lumine fertur.

720 versarique potest, globus ut, si forte, pilai
dimidia ex parti candenti lumine tinctus,
versandoque globum variantis edere formas,
donique eam partem, quae cumque est ignibus aucta,

ad speciem vertit nobis oculosque patentis;
725 inde minutatim retro contorquet et aufert
luciferam partem glomeraminis atque pilai;
ut Babylonica Chaldaicum doctrina refutans
astrologorum artem contra convincere tendit,
proinde quasi id fieri nequeat quod pugnat uterque
730 aut minus hoc illo sit cur amplectier ausis.
denique cur nequeat semper nova luna creari
ordine formarum certo certisque figuris
inque dies privos aborisci quaeque creata
atque alia illius reparari in parte locoque,
735 difficilest ratione docere et vincere verbis,
ordine cum videas tam certo multa creari.

[695] Or else because the air is denser in certain parts, therefore the quivering beam of fire is retarded below the earth and cannot easily pass through and force its way out to its place of rising: for this reason in winter-time nights linger long, ere the beamy badge of day arrive.

Or else, because in the way just mentioned at alternate parts of the year fires are accustomed to stream together more slowly and more quickly, which cause the sun to rise in a certain point, therefore it is that those appear to speak the truth [who suppose a fresh sun to be born every day.]

The moon may shine because struck by the sun's rays, and turn that light every day more and more directly towards our sight, in proportion as she recedes from the sun's orb, until just opposite to him she has shone out with full light and at her rising as she soars aloft has beheld his setting; and then by slow steps reversing as it were her course she must in the same way hide her light, the nearer and nearer she now glides to the sun from a different quarter through the circle of the signs; according to the theory of those who suppose the moon to be like a ball and to hold on her course under the sun.

She may also very possibly revolve with her own light and display various phases of brightness; for there may well be another body which is carried on and glides in her company getting before her path and obstructing her in all manner of ways and yet cannot be seen, because it glides on without light.

She may also revolve, like it may be to a spherical ball steeped over one half in shining light, and as she rolls round this sphere she may present changing phases, until she has turned that half which is illuminated full towards our sight and open eyes; then by slow steps she whirls back and withdraws the light-fraught half of the spherical ball; as the Babylonian science of the Chaldees refuting the system of the astronomers essays to prove in opposition to them; just as though that which each party fights for might not be equally true, or there were any reason why you should venture to embrace the one theory less than the other.

Again, why a new moon should not be born every day after a regular

succession of forms and regular phases, and each day the one which is born perish and another be produced in its room and stead, it is not easy to teach by reasoning or prove by words, since so many things can be born in such a regular succession.

it Ver et Venus et Veneris praenuntius ante
pennatus graditur, Zephyri vestigia propter
Flora quibus mater praespargens ante viai
740 cuncta coloribus egregiis et odoribus opplet.
inde loci sequitur Calor aridus et comes una
pulverulenta Ceres et etesia flabra aquilonum.
inde Autumnus adit, graditur simul Euhius Euan.
inde aliae tempestates ventique secuntur,
745 altitonans Voltumnus et Auster fulmine pollens.
tandem Bruma nives adfert pigrumque rigorem
reddit. Hiemps sequitur crepitans hanc dentibus algu.
quo minus est mirum, si certo tempore luna
gignitur et certo deletur tempore rusus,
750 cum fieri possint tam certo tempore multa.
Solis item quoque defectus lunaeque latebras
pluribus e causis fieri tibi posse putandumst.
nam cur luna queat terram secludere solis
lumine et a terris altum caput obstruere ei,
755 obiciens caecum radiis ardentibus orbem,
tempore eodem aliud facere id non posse putetur
corpus, quod cassum labatur lumine semper?
solque suos etiam dimittere languidus ignis
tempore cur certo nequeat recreareque lumen,
760 cum loca praeteriit flammis infesta per auras,
quae faciunt ignis interstingui atque perire?
et cur terra queat lunam spoliare vicissim
lumine et oppressum solem super ipsa tenere,
menstrua dum rigidas coni perlabitur umbras,
765 tempore eodem aliud nequeat succurrere lunae
corpus vel supra solis perlabier orbem,
quod radios inter rumpat lumenque profusum?
et tamen ipsa suo si fulget luna nitore,
cur nequeat certa mundi languescere parte,
770 dum loca luminibus propriis inimica per exit?
menstrua dum rigidas coni perlabitur umbras.
Quod superest, quoniam magni per caerula mundi
qua fieri quicquid posset ratione resolvi,
solis uti varios cursus lunaeque meatus
775 noscere possemus quae vis et causa cieret,

quove modo possent effecto lumine obire
et neque opinantis tenebris obducere terras,
cum quasi conivent et aperto lumine rursum
omnia convisunt clara loca candida luce,
780 nunc redeo ad mundi novitatem et mollia terrae
arva, novo fetu quid primum in luminis oras
tollere et incertis crerint committere ventis.

[736] Spring and Venus go their way, and the winged harbinger of Venus steps on before; and close on Zephyr's footprints mother Flora straws all the way before them and covers it over with the choicest colors and odors.

Next in order follows parching heat, and in its company dusty Ceres and the etesian blasts of the north winds.

Next autumn advances and Euhius Euan steps on together.

Then other seasons and winds follow, loud-roaring Volturnus and the south wind stored with lightning.

At last midwinter brings with it snows and gives back benumbing cold; after it follows winter with teeth chattering with cold.

It is therefore the less strange that a moon is begotten at a fixed time and at a fixed time is destroyed again, since many things may take place at a time so surely fixed.

The eclipses of the sun likewise and the obscurations of the moon you may suppose to take place from many different causes.

For why should the moon be able to shut the earth out from the sun's light and on the earthward side put in his way her high exalted head, placing her dark orb before his burning rays; and yet at the same time it be thought that another body gliding on ever without light cannot do the same?

Why too should not the sun be able, quite exhausted, to lose his fires at a fixed time, and again reproduce his light when in his journey through the air he has passed by spots fatal to his flames, which cause his fires to be quenched and to perish?

And why should the earth be able in turn to rob the moon of light and moreover herself to keep the sun suppressed, while in her monthly course she glides through the well-defined shadows of the cone; and yet at the same time another body not be able to pass under the moon or glide above the sun's orb, breaking off its rays and the light it sheds forth?

Yes, and if the moon shines with her own brightness, why should she not be able to grow faint in a certain part of the world, while she is passing through spots hostile to her own light?

And now further since I have explained in what way every thing might take place throughout the blue of the great heaven; how we might know what force and cause set in motion the varied courses of the sun and wanderings of the moon; and in what way their light might be intercepted and they be lost to us and spread darkness over the earth little expecting if when so to speak they

close their eye of light and opening it again survey all places shining in bright radiance, I now go back to the infancy of the world and the tender age of the fields of earth and show what first in their early essays of production they resolved to raise into the borders of light and give in charge to the wayward winds.

Principio genus herbarum viridemque nitorem
terra dedit circum collis camposque per omnis,
785 florida fulserunt viridanti prata colore,
arboribusque datumst variis exinde per auras
crescendi magnum inmissis certamen habenis.
ut pluma atque pili primum saetaeque creantur
quadripedum membris et corpore pennipotentum,
790 sic nova tum tellus herbas virgultaque primum
sustulit, inde loci mortalia saecla creavit
multa modis multis varia ratione coorta.
nam neque de caelo cecidisse animalia possunt,
nec terrestria de salsis exisse lacunis.
795 linquitur ut merito maternum nomen adepta
terra sit, e terra quoniam sunt cuncta creata.
multaque nunc etiam existunt animalia terris
imbribus et calido solis concreta vapore;
quo minus est mirum, si tum sunt plura coorta
800 et maiora, nova tellure atque aethere adulta.
principio genus alituum variaeque volucres
ova relinquebant exclusae tempore verno,
folliculos ut nunc teretis aestate cicadae
lincunt sponte sua victum vitamque petentes.
805 tum tibi terra dedit primum mortalia saecla.
multus enim calor atque umor superabat in arvis.
hoc ubi quaeque loci regio opportuna dabatur,
crescebant uteri terram radicibus apti;
quos ubi tempore maturo pate fecerat aetas
810 infantum, fugiens umorem aurasque petessens,
convertebat ibi natura foramina terrae
et sucum venis cogebat fundere apertis
consimilem lactis, sicut nunc femina quaeque
cum peperit, dulci repletur lacte, quod omnis
815 impetus in mammas convertitur ille alimenti.
terra cibum pueris, vestem vapor, herba cubile
praebebat multa et molli lanugine abundans.
at novitas mundi nec frigora dura ciebat
nec nimios aestus nec magnis viribus auras.

sheen about the hills and overall the plains; the flowery meadows glittered with the bright green hue, and next in order to the different trees was given a strong and emulous desire of growing up into the air with full unbridled powers.

As feathers and hairs and bristles are first born on the limbs of four-footed beasts and the body of the strong of wing, thus the new earth then first put forth grass and bushes, and next gave birth to the races of mortal creatures springing up many in number in many ways after divers fashions.

For no living creatures can have dropped from heaven nor can those belonging to the land have come out of the salt pools.

It follows that with good reason the earth has gotten the name of mother, since all things have been produced out of the earth.

And many living creatures even now spring out of the earth taking form by rains and the heat of the sun.

It is therefore the less strange if at that time they sprang up more in number and larger in size, having come to maturity in the freshness of earth and ether.

First of all the race of fowls and the various birds would leave their eggs, hatched in the springtime, just as now in summer the cicades leave spontaneously their gossamer coats in quest of a living and life.

Then you must know did the earth first give forth races of mortal men.

For much heat and moisture would then abound in the fields; and therefore wherever a suitable spot offered, wombs would grow attached to the earth by roots; and when the warmth of the infants, flying the wet and craving the air, had opened these in the fulness of time, nature would turn to that spot the pores of the earth and constrain it to yield from its opened veins a liquid most like to milk, even as now-a-days every woman when she has borne, is filled with sweet milk, because all that current of nutriment streams towards the breasts.

To the children the earth would furnish food, the heat raiment, the grass a bed rich in abundance of soft down.

Then the fresh youth of the world would give forth neither severe colds nor excessive heats nor gales of great violence;

820 omnia enim pariter crescunt et robora sumunt.

Quare etiam atque etiam maternum nomen adepta

terra tenet merito, quoniam genus ipsa creavit

humanum atque animal prope certo tempore fudit

omne quod in magnis bacchatur montibus passim,

825 aëriasque simul volucres variantibus formis.

sed quia finem aliquam pariendi debet habere,

destitit, ut mulier spatio defessa vetusto.

mutat enim mundi naturam totius aetas

ex alioque alius status excipere omnia debet

830 nec manet ulla sui similis res: omnia migrant,

omnia commutat natura et vertere cogit.
namque aliud putrescit et aevo debile languet,
porro aliud succrescit et e contemptibus exit.
sic igitur mundi naturam totius aetas
835 mutat, et ex alio terram status excipit alter,
quod potuit nequeat, possit quod non tulit ante.
Multaque tum tellus etiam portenta creare
conatast mira facie membrisque coorta,
androgynem, interutras necutrumque utrimque remotum,
840 orba pedum partim, manuum viduata vicissim,
muta sine ore etiam, sine voltu caeca reperta,
vinctaque membrorum per totum corpus adhaesu,
nec facere ut possent quicquam nec cedere quoquam
nec vitare malum nec sumere quod volet usus.
845 cetera de genere hoc monstra ac portenta creabat,
ne ququam, quoniam natura absterruit auctum
nec potuere cupitum aetatis tangere florem
nec reperire cibum nec iungi per Veneris res.
multa videmus enim rebus concurrere debere,
850 ut propagando possint procudere saecula;
pabula primum ut sint, genitalia deinde per artus
semina qua possint membris manare remissis,
feminaque ut maribus coniungi possit, habere,
mutua qui mutant inter se gaudia uterque.
855 Multaque tum interiisse animantum saecula necessest
nec potuisse propagando procudere prolem.
nam quae cumque vides vesci vitalibus auris,
aut dolus aut virtus aut denique mobilitas est
ex ineunte aevo genus id tuta TA reservans.

[819] for all things grow and acquire strength in a like proportion.

Wherefore again and again I say the earth with good title has gotten and keeps the name of mother, since she of herself gave birth to mankind and at a time nearly fixed shed forth every beast that ranges wildly over the great mountains, and at the same time the fowls of the air with all their varied shapes.

But because she must have some limit set to her bearing, she ceased like a woman worn out by length of days.

For time changes the nature of the whole world and all things must pass on from one condition to another, and nothing continues like to itself: all things quit their bounds, all things nature changes and compels to alter.

One thing crumbles away and is worn and enfeebled with age, then another comes unto honor and issues out of its state of contempt.

In this way then time changes the nature of the whole world and the earth

passes out of one condition into another: what once it could, it can bear no more, in order to be able to bear what before it did not bear.

And many monsters too the earth at that time essayed to produce, things coming up with strange face and limbs, the man-woman, a thing between the two and neither the one sex nor the other, widely differing from both; some things deprived of feet, others again destitute of hands, others too proving dumb without mouth, or blind without eyes, and things bound fast by the adhesion of their limbs overall the body, so that they could not do anything nor go anywhere nor avoid the evil nor take what their needs required.

Every other monster and portent of this kind she would produce, but all in vain, since nature set a ban on their increase and they could not reach the coveted flower of age nor find food nor be united in marriage.

For we see that many conditions must meet together in things in order that they may beget and continue their kinds; first a supply of food, then a way by which the birth-producing seeds throughout the frame may stream from the relaxed limbs; also in order that the woman may be united with the male, the possession of organs whereby they may each interchange mutual joys.

And many races of living things must then have died out and been unable to beget and continue their breed.

For in the case of all things which you see breathing the breath of life, either craft or courage or else speed has from the beginning of its existence protected and preserved each particular race.

860 multaque sunt, nobis ex utilitate sua quae
commendata manent, tutelae tradita nostrae.
principio genus acre leonum saevaque saecula
tutatast virtus, volpes dolus et fuga cervos.
at levisomna canum fido cum pectore corda,
865 et genus omne quod est veterino semine partum
lanigeraeque simul pecudes et bucera saecula
omnia sunt hominum tutelae tradita, Memmi;
nam cupide fugere feras pacemque secuta
sunt et larga suo sine pabula parta labore,
870 quae damus utilitatis eorum praemia causa.
at quis nil horum tribuit natura, nec ipsa
sponte sua possent ut vivere nec dare nobis
utilitatem aliquam, quare pateremur eorum
praesidio nostro pasci genus esseque tutum,
875 scilicet haec aliis praedae lucroque iacebant
indupedita suis fatalibus omnia vinclis,
donec ad interitum genus id natura redegit.
Sed neque Centauri fuerunt nec tempore in ullo
esse queunt duplici natura et corpore bino
880 ex alienigenis membris compacta, potestas

hinc illinc partis ut sat par esse potissit.
id licet hinc quamvis hebeti cognoscere corde.
principio circum tribus actis impiger annis
florete equus, puer haut quaquam; nam saepe etiam nunc
885 ubera mammarum in somnis lactantia quaeret.
post ubi equum validae vires aetate senecta
membraque deficiunt fugienti languida vita,
tum demum puerili aevo florentia iuventus
officit et molli vestit lanugine malas;
890 ne forte ex homine et veterino semine equorum
conferri credas Centauros posse neque esse,
aut rapidis canibus succinctas semimarinis
corporibus Scyllas et cetera de genere horum,
inter se quorum discordia membra videmus;
895 quae neque florescunt pariter nec robora sumunt
corporibus neque prociunt aetate senecta
nec simili Venere ardescunt nec moribus unis
conveniunt neque sunt eadem iucunda per artus.

[860] And there are many things which, recommended to us by their useful services, continue to exist consigned to our protection.

In the first place the fierce breed of lions and the savage races their courage has protected, foxes their craft and stags their proneness to flight.

But light-sleeping dogs with faithful heart in breast and every kind which is born of the seed of beasts of burden and at the same time the woolly flocks and the horned herds are all consigned, Memmius, to the protection of man.

For they have ever fled with eagerness from wild beasts and have ensued peace and plenty of food obtained without their own labor, as we give it in requital of their useful services.

But those to whom nature has granted none of these qualities, so that they could neither live by their own means nor perform for us any useful service in return for which we should suffer their kind to feed and be safe under our protection, those, you are to know, would lie exposed as a prey and booty of others, hampered all in their own death-bringing shackles, until nature brought that kind to utter destruction.

But Centaurs never have existed, and at no time can there exist things of twofold nature and double body formed into one frame out of limbs of alien kinds, such that the faculties and powers of this and that portion cannot be sufficiently like.

This however dull of understanding you may learn from what follows:

To begin, a horse when three years have gone round is in the prime of his vigor, far different the boy: often even at that age he will call in his sleep for the milk of the breast.

Afterwards when in advanced age his lusty strength and limbs now faint

with ebbing life fail the horse, then and not till then youth in the flower of age commences for that boy and clothes his cheeks in soft down; that you may not haply believe that out of a man and the burden-carrying seed of horses Centaurs can be formed and have being; or that Scyllas with bodies half those of fishes girdled round with raving dogs can exist, and all other things of the kind, whose limbs we see cannot harmonize together; as they neither come to their flower at the same time nor reach the fulness of their bodily strength nor lose it in advanced old age, nor burn with similar passions nor have compatible manners, nor feel the same things give pleasure throughout their frames.

quippe videre licet pinguescere saepe cicuta
900 barbigeras pecudes, homini quae est acre venenum.
flamma quidem vero cum corpora fulva leonum
tam soleat torrere atque urere quam genus omne
visceris in terris quod cumque et sanguinis extet,
qui fieri potuit, triplici cum corpore ut una,
905 prima leo, postrema draco, media ipsa, Chimaera
ore foras acrem flaret de corpore flammam?
quare etiam tellure nova caeloque recenti
talìa qui fingit potuisse animalia gigni,
nixus in hoc uno novitatis nomine inani,
910 multa licet simili ratione effutiat ore,
aurea tum dicat per terras flumina vulgo
fluxisse et gemmis florere arbusta suësse
aut hominem tanto membrorum esse impete natum,
trans maria alta pedum nisus ut ponere posset
915 et manibus totum circum se vertere caelum.
nam quod multa fuere in terris semina rerum,
tempore quo primum tellus animalia fudit,
nil tamen est signi mixtas potuisse creari
inter se pecudes compactaque membra animantum,
920 propterea quia quae de terris nunc quoque abundant
herbarum genera ac fruges arbustaque laeta
non tamen inter se possunt complexa creari,
sed res quaeque suo ritu procedit et omnes
foedere naturae certo discrimina servant.
925 Et genus humanum multo fuit illud in arvis
durius, ut decuit, tellus quod dura creasset,
et maioribus et solidis magis ossibus intus
fundatum, validis aptum per viscera nervis,
nec facile ex aestu nec frigore quod caperetur
930 nec novitate cibi nec labi corporis ulla.
multaque per caelum solis volventia lustra

volgivago vitam tractabant more ferarum.
nec robustus erat curvi moderator aratri
quisquam, nec scibat ferro molirier arva
935 nec nova defodere in terram virgulta neque altis
arboribus veteres decidere falcibus ramos.
quod sol atque imbres dederant, quod terra crearat
sponte sua, satis id placabat pectora donum.
glandiferas inter curabant corpora quercus

[898] Thus we may see bearded goats often fatten on hemlock which for man is rank poison.

Since flame moreover is wont to scorch and burn the tawny bodies of lions just as much as any other kind of flesh and blood existing on earth, how could it be that a single chimera with triple body, in front a lion, behind a dragon, in the middle the goat whose name it bears, could breathe out at the mouth fierce flame from its body?

Wherefore also he who fables that in the new time of the earth and the fresh youth of heaven such living creatures could have been begotten, resting upon this one futile term new, may babble out many things in like fashion, may say that rivers then ran with gold over all parts of the earth and that trees were wont to blossom with precious stones, or that man was born with such giant force of frame that he could wade on foot across deep seas and whirl the whole heaven about him with his hands.

For the fact that there were many seeds of things in the earth what time it first shed forth living creatures, is yet no proof that there could have been produced beasts of different kinds mixed together, and limbs of different living things formed into a single frame, because the kinds of herbage and corn and joyous trees which even now spring in plenty out of the earth yet cannot be produced with the several sorts plaited into one, but each thing goes on after its own fashion, and all preserve their distinctive differences according to a fixed law of nature.

But the race of man then in the fields was much hardier, as beseemed it to be, since the hard earth had produced it; and built on a groundwork of larger and more solid bones within, knit with powerful sinews throughout the frame of flesh; not lightly to be disabled by heat or cold or strange kinds of food or any malady of body.

And during the revolution of many lusters of the sun through heaven they led a life after the roving fashion of wild beasts.

No one then was a sturdy guider of the bent plow or knew how to labor the fields with iron or plant in the ground young saplings or lop with pruning-hooks old boughs from the high trees.

What the sun and rains had given, what the earth had produced spontaneously, was guerdon sufficient to content their hearts.

Among acorn-bearing oaks they would refresh their bodies for the most

part;

940 plerumque; et quae nunc hiberno tempore cernis
arbita puniceo fieri matura colore,
plurima tum tellus etiam maiora ferebat.
multaque praeterea novitas tum florida mundi
pabula dura tulit, miseris mortalibus ampla.
945 at sedare sitim fluvii fontesque vocabant,
ut nunc montibus e magnis decursus aquai
claricitat late sitientia saecla ferarum.
denique nota vagis silvestria templa tenebant
nympharum, quibus e scibant umore fluenta
950 lubrica proluvie larga lavere umida saxa,
umida saxa, super viridi stillantia musco,
et partim plano scatere atque erumpere campo.
necdum res igni scibant tractare neque uti
pellibus et spoliis corpus vestire ferarum,
955 sed nemora atque cavos montis silvasque colebant
et frutices inter condebant squalida membra
verbera ventorum vitare imbrisque coacti.
nec commune bonum poterant spectare neque ullis
moribus inter se scibant nec legibus uti.
960 quod cuique obtulerat praedae fortuna, ferebat
sponte sua sibi quisque valere et vivere doctus.
et Venus in silvis iungebat corpora amantum;
conciliabat enim vel mutua quamque cupido
vel violenta viri vis atque inpena libido
965 vel pretium, glandes atque arbita vel pira lecta.
et manuum mira freti virtute pedumque
consectabantur silvestria saecla ferarum
missilibus saxis et magno pondere clavae.
multaque vincebant, vitabant pauca latebris;
970 saetigerisque pares subus silvestria membra
nuda dabant terrae nocturno tempore capti,
circum se foliis ac frondibus involventes.
nec plangore diem magno solemque per agros
quaerebant pavidum palantes noctis in umbris,
975 sed taciti respectabant somnoque sepulti,
dum rosea face sol inferret lumina caelo.
a parvis quod enim consuerant cernere semper
alternis tenebras et lucem tempore gigni,
non erat ut fieri posset mirari umquam
980 nec diffidere, ne terras aeterna teneret
nox in perpetuum detracto lumine solis.

sed magis illud erat curae, quod saecula ferarum
infestam miseris faciebant saepe quietem.

[940] and the arbuté-berries which you now see in the winter-time ripen with a bright scarlet hue, the earth would then bear in greatest plenty and of a larger size; and many coarse kinds of food besides the teeming freshness of the world then bare, more than enough for poor wretched men.

But rivers and springs invited to slake thirst, even as now a rush of water down from the great hills summons with clear plash far and wide the thirsty races of wild beasts.

Then too as they ranged about they would occupy the well-known woodland haunts of the nymphs, out of which they knew that smooth-gliding streams of water with a copious gush bathed the dripping rocks, the dripping rocks, trickling down over the green moss; and in parts welled and bubbled out over the level plain.

And as yet they knew not how to apply fire to their purposes or to make use of skins and clothe their body in the spoils of wild beasts, but they would dwell in woods and mountain-caves and forests and shelter in the brushwood their squalid limbs when driven to shun the buffeting of the winds and the rains.

And they were unable to look to the general weal and knew not how to make a common use of any customs or laws.

Whatever prize fortune threw in his way, each man would bear off, trained at his own discretion to think of himself and live for himself alone.

And Venus would join the bodies of lovers in the woods; for each woman was gained over either by mutual desire or the headstrong violence and vehement lust of the man or a bribe of some acorns and arbuté-berries or choice pears.

And trusting to the marvelous powers of their hands and feet they would pursue the forest-haunting races of wild beasts with showers of stones and club of ponderous weight; and many they would conquer, a few they would avoid in hiding-places; and like to bristly swine just as they were they would throw their savage limbs all naked on the ground, when overtaken by night, covering themselves up with leaves and boughs.

Yet never with loud wailings would they call for the daylight and the sun, wandering terror-stricken over the fields in the shadows of night, but silent and buried in sleep they would wait, till the sun with rosy torch carried light into heaven; for accustomed as they had been from childhood always to see darkness and light begotten time about, never could any wonder come over them, nor any misgiving that never-ending night would cover the earth and the light of the sun be withdrawn for evermore.

eiectique domo fugiebant saxea tecta
985 spumigeri suis adventu validique leonis
atque intempesta cedebant nocte paventes

hospitibus saevis instrata cubilia fronde.
Nec nimio tum plus quam nunc mortalia saecula
dulcia linquebant lamentis lumina vitae.
990 unus enim tum quisque magis deprensus eorum
pabula viva feris praebebat, dentibus haustus,
et nemora ac montis gemitu silvasque replebat
viva videns vivo sepeliri viscera busto.
at quos effugium servarat corpore adeso,
995 posterius tremulas super ulcera tetra tenentes
palmas horriferis accibant vocibus Orcum,
doneque eos vita privarant vermina saeva
expertis opis, ignaros quid volnera vellent.
at non multa virum sub signis milia ducta
1000 una dies dabat exitio nec turbida ponti
aequora lidebant navis ad saxa virosque.
nam temere in cassum frustra mare saepe coortum
saevibat leviterque minas ponebat inanis,
nec poterat quemquam placidi pellacia ponti
1005 subdola pellicere in fraudem ridentibus undis.
improba navigii ratio tum caeca iacebat.
tum penuria deinde cibi languentia leto
membra dabat, contra nunc rerum copia mersat.
illi imprudentes ipsi sibi saepe venenum
1010 vergebant, nunc dant aliis sollertius ipsi.
Inde casas postquam ac pellis ignemque pararunt
et mulier coniuncta viro concessit in unum

* * *

cognita sunt, prolemque ex se videre creatam,
tum genus humanum primum mollescere coepit.
1015 ignis enim curavit, ut alsia corpora frigus
non ita iam possent caeli sub tegmine ferre,
et Venus inminuit viris puerique parentum
blanditiis facile ingenium fregere superbum.

[983] But what gave them trouble was rather the races of wild beasts which would often render repose fatal to the poor wretches.

And driven from their home they would fly from their rocky shelters on the approach of a foaming bear or a strong lion, and in the dead of night they would surrender in terror to their savage guests their sleeping-places strewn with leaves.

Nor then much more than now would the races of mortal men leave the sweet light of ebbing life.

For then this one or that other one of them would be more likely to be

seized, and torn open by their teeth would furnish to the wild beasts a living food, and would fill with his moaning woods and mountains and forests as he looked on his living flesh buried in a living grave.

But those whom flight had saved with body eaten into, holding ever after their quivering palms over the noisome sores would summon death with appalling cries, until cruel gripings had rid them of life, forlorn of help, unwitting what wounds wanted.

But then a single day gave not over to death many thousands of men marching with banners spread, nor did the stormy waters of the sea dash on the rocks men and ships.

At this time the sea would often rise up and rage without aim, without purpose, without result, and just as lightly put off its empty threats; nor could the winning wiles of the calm sea treacherously entice any one to his ruin with laughing waters, when the reckless craft of the skipper had not yet risen into the light.

Then too want of food would consign to death their fainting frames, now on the contrary 'tis plenty sinks into ruin.

They unwittingly would often pour out poison for themselves; now with nicer skill men give it to their son's wife instead.

Next after they had got themselves huts and skins and fire, and the woman united with the man passed with him into one [domicile and the duties of wedlock were] learnt [by the two], and they saw an offspring born from them, then first mankind began to soften.

For fire made their chilled bodies less able now to bear the frost beneath the canopy of heaven, and Venus impaired their strength and children with their caresses soon broke down the haughty temper of parents.

Then too neighbors began to join in a league of friendship mutually desiring neither to do nor suffer harm;

tunc et amicitiam coeperunt iungere aventes

1020 finitimi inter se nec laedere nec violari,
et pueros commendarunt muliebreque saeculum,
vocibus et gestu cum balbe significarent
imbecillorum esse aequum misererier omnis.

nec tamen omnimodis poterat concordia gigni,

1025 sed bona magnaue pars servabat foedera caste;
aut genus humanum iam tum foret omne peremptum
nec potuisset adhuc perducere saecula propago.

At varios linguae sonitus natura subegit

mittere et utilitas expressit nomina rerum,

1030 non alia longe ratione atque ipsa videtur
protrahere ad gestum pueros infantia linguae,
cum facit ut digito quae sint praesentia monstrent.
sentit enim vim quisque suam quod possit abuti.

cornua nata prius vitulo quam frontibus extent,
 1035 illis iratus petit atque infestus inurget.
 at catuli pantherarum scymnique leonum
 unguibus ac pedibus iam tum morsuque repugnant,
 vix etiam cum sunt dentes unguesque creati.
 alituum porro genus alis omne videmus
 1040 fidere et a pennis tremulum petere auxiliatum.
 proinde putare aliquem tum nomina distribuisse
 rebus et inde homines didicisse vocabula prima,
 desiperest. nam cur hic posset cuncta notare
 vocibus et varios sonitus emittere linguae,
 1045 tempore eodem alii facere id non quisse putentur?
 praeterea si non alii quoque vocibus usi
 inter se fuerant, unde insita notities est
 utilitatis et unde data est huic prima potestas,
 quid vellet facere ut sciret animoque videret?
 1050 cogere item pluris unus victosque domare
 non poterat, rerum ut perdiscere nomina vellent.
 nec ratione docere ulla suadereque surdis,
 quid sit opus facto, facilest; neque enim paterentur
 nec ratione ulla sibi ferrent amplius auris
 1055 vocis inauditos sonitus obtundere frustra.
 postremo quid in hac mirabile tantoperest re,
 si genus humanum, cui vox et lingua vigeret,
 pro vario sensu varia res voce notaret?
 cum pecudes mutae, cum denique saecula ferarum
 1060 dissimilis soleant voces variasque ciere,
 cum metus aut dolor est et cum iam gaudia gliscunt.

[1021] and asked for indulgence to children and womankind, when with cries and gestures they declared in stammering speech that meet it is for all to have mercy on the weak.

And though harmony could not be established without exception, yet a very large portion observed their agreements with good faith, or else the race of man would then have been wholly cut off, nor could breeding have continued their generations to this day.

But nature impelled them to utter the various sounds of the tongue and use struck out the names of things, much in the same way as the inability to speak is seen in its turn to drive children to the use of gestures, when it forces them to point with the finger at the things which are before them.

For everyone feels how far he can make use of his peculiar powers.

Ere the horns of a calf are formed and project from his forehead, he butts with it when angry and pushes out in his rage.

Then whelps of panthers and cubs of lions fight with claws and feet and

teeth at a time when teeth and claws are hardly yet formed.

Again we see every kind of fowl trust to wings and seek from pinions a fluttering succor.

Therefore to suppose that some one man at that time apportioned names to things and that men from him learnt their first words, is sheer folly.

For why should this particular man be able to denote all things bywords and to utter the various sounds of the tongue, and yet at the same time others be supposed not to have been able to do so?

Again if others as well as he had not made use of words among themselves, whence was implanted in this man the previous conception of its use and whence was given to him the original faculty, to know and perceive in mind what he wanted to do?

Again one man could not constrain and subdue and force many to choose to learn the names of things.

It is no easy thing in anyway to teach and convince the deaf of what is needful to be done; for they never would suffer nor in anyway endure sounds of voice hitherto unheard to continue to be dinned fruitlessly into their ears.

Lastly what is there so passing strange in this circumstance, that the race of men whose voice and tongue were in full force, should denote things by different words as different feelings prompted?

Since dumb brutes, yes and the races of wild beasts are accustomed to give forth distinct and varied sounds, when they have fear or pain and when joys are rife.

quippe etenim licet id rebus cognoscere apertis.

irritata canum cum primum magna Molossum

molliora ricta fremunt duos nudantia dentes,

¹⁰⁶⁵ longe alio sonitu rabies restricta minatur,

et cum iam latrant et vocibus omnia complent;

at catulos blande cum lingua lambere temptant

aut ubi eos lactant, pedibus morsuque potentes

suspensis teneros imitantur dentibus haustus,

¹⁰⁷⁰ longe alio pacto gannitu vocis adulant,

et cum deserti baubantur in aedibus, aut cum

plorantis fugiunt summisso corpore plagas.

denique non hinnitus item differre videtur,

inter equas ubi equus florenti aetate iuventus

¹⁰⁷⁵ pinnigeri saevit calcaribus ictus Amoris

et fremitum patulis sub naribus edit ad arma,

et cum sic alias concussis artibus hinnit?

postremo genus alituum variaequae volucres,

accipitres atque ossifragae mergique marinis

¹⁰⁸⁰ fluctibus in salso victum vitamque petentes,

longe alias alio iaciunt in tempore voces,

et quom de victu certant praedaeque repugnant.
et partim mutant cum tempestatibus una
raucisonos cantus, cornicum ut saecla vetusta
1085 corvorumque gregis ubi aquam dicuntur et imbris
poscere et inter dum ventos aurasque vocare.
ergo si varii sensus animalia cogunt,
muta tamen cum sint, varias emittere voces,
quanto mortalis magis aequumst tum potuisse
1090 dissimilis alia atque alia res voce notare!
Illud in his rebus tacitus ne forte requiras,
fulmen detulit in terram mortalibus ignem
primitus, inde omnis flammaram diditur ardor;
multa videmus enim caelestibus insita flammis
1095 fulgere, cum caeli donavit plaga vaporis.
et ramosa tamen cum ventis pulsa vacillans
aestuat in ramos incumbens arboris arbor,
exprimitur validis extritus viribus ignis,
emicat inter dum flammai fervidus ardor,
1100 mutua dum inter se rami stirpesque teruntur.

[1062] This you may learn from facts plain to sense: when the large spongy open lips of Molossian dogs begin to growl enraged and bare their hard teeth, thus drawn back in rage they threaten in a tone far different from that in which they bark outright and fill with sounds all the places round.

Again when they essay fondly to lick their whelps with their tongue or when they toss them with their feet and snapping at them make a feint with lightly closing teeth of swallowing though with gentle forbearance, they caress them with a yelping sound of a sort greatly differing from that which they utter when left alone in a house they bay or when they slink away howling from blows with a crouching body.

Again is not the neigh too seen to differ, when a young stallion in the flower of age rages among the mares smitten by the goads of winged love, and when with wide-stretched nostrils he snorts out the signal to arms, and when as it chances on any occasion he neighs with limbs all shaking?

Lastly, the race of fowls and various birds, hawks and ospreys and gulls seeking their living in the salt water mid the waves of the sea, utter at a different time noises widely different from those they make when they are fighting for food and struggling with their prey.

And some of them change together with the weather their harsh croakings, as the long-lived races of crows and flocks of rooks when they are said to be calling for water and rain and sometimes to be summoning winds and gales.

Therefore if different sensations compel creatures, dumb though they be, to utter different sounds, how much more natural it is that mortal men in those times should have been able to denote dissimilar things by many different

words!

And lest haply on this head you ask in silent thought this question, it was lightning that brought fire down on earth for mortals in the beginning; thence the whole heat of flames is spread abroad.

Thus we see many things shine dyed in heavenly flames when the stroke from heaven has stored them with its heat.

Ay and without this when a branching tree sways to and fro and tosses about under the buffeting of the winds, pressing against the boughs of another tree, fire is forced out by the power of the violent friction, and sometimes the burning heat of flame flashes out, the boughs and stems rubbing against each other.

quorum utrumque dedisse potest mortalibus ignem.

inde cibum quoquere ac flammae mollire vapore

sol docuit, quoniam mitescere multa videbant

verberibus radiorum atque aestu victa per agros.

1105 Inque dies magis hi victum vitamque priorem

commutare novis monstrabant rebus et igni,

ingenio qui praestabant et corde vigeabant.

condere coeperunt urbis arcemque locare

praesidium reges ipsi sibi perfugiumque,

1110 et pecudes et agros divisere atque dedere

pro facie cuiusque et viribus ingenioque;

nam facies multum valuit viresque vigeabant.

posterius res inventast aurumque repertum,

quod facile et validis et pulchris dempsit honorem;

1115 divitioris enim sectam plerumque secuntur

quam lubet et fortes et pulchro corpore creti.

quod siquis vera vitam ratione gubernet,

divitiae grandes homini sunt vivere parce

aequo animo; neque enim est umquam penuria parvi.

1120 at claros homines voluerunt se atque potentes,

ut fundamento stabili fortuna maneret

et placidam possent opulenti degere vitam,

ne quiquam, quoniam ad summum succedere honorem

certantes iter infestum fecere viai,

1125 et tamen e summo, quasi fulmen, deicit ictos

invidia inter dum contemptim in Tartara taetra;

invidia quoniam ceu fulmine summa vaporant

plerumque et quae sunt aliis magis edita cumque;

ut satius multo iam sit parere quietum

1130 quam regere imperio res velle et regna tenere.

proinde sine in cassum defessi sanguine sudent,

angustum per iter luctantes ambitionis;

quandoquidem sapiunt alieno ex ore petuntque
res ex auditis potius quam sensibus ipsis,
1135 nec magis id nunc est neque erit mox quam fuit ante.
Ergo regibus occisis subversa iacebat
pristina maiestas soliorum et sceptrasuperba,
et capitis summi praeclarum insigne cruentum
sub pedibus vulgi magnum lugebat honorem;
1140 nam cupide conculcatur nimis ante metutum.

[1101] Now either of these accidents may have given fire to men.

Next the sun taught them to cook food and soften it with the heat of flame, since they would see many things grow mellow when subdued by the strokes of the rays and by heat throughout the land.

And more and more every day men who excelled in intellect and were of vigorous understanding would kindly show them how to exchange their former way of living for new methods.

Kings began to build towns and lay out a citadel as a place of strength and of refuge for themselves, and divided cattle and lands and gave to each man in proportion to his personal beauty and strength and intellect; for beauty and vigorous strength were much esteemed.

Afterwards wealth was discovered and gold found out, which soon robbed of their honors strong and beautiful alike; for men however valiant and beautiful of person generally follow in the train of the richer man.

But were a man to order his life by the rules of true reason, a frugal subsistence joined to a contented mind is for him great riches; for never is there any lack of a little.

But men desired to be famous and powerful, in order that their fortunes might rest on a firm foundation and they might be able by their wealth to lead a tranquil life; but in vain, since in their struggle to mount up to the highest dignities they rendered their path one full of danger; and even if they reach it, yet envy like a thunderbolt sometimes strikes and dashes men down from the highest point with ignominy into noisome Tartarus; since the highest summits and those elevated above the level of other things are mostly blasted by envy as by a thunderbolt; so that far better it is to obey in peace and quiet than to wish to rule with power supreme and be the master of kingdoms.

Therefore let men wear themselves out to no purpose and sweat drops of blood, as they struggle on along the strait road of ambition, since they gather their knowledge from the mouths of others and follow after things from hearsay rather than the dictates of their own feelings; and this prevails not now nor will prevail by and bye anymore than it has prevailed before.

Kings therefore being slain the old majesty of thrones and proud scepters were overthrown and laid in the dust, and the glorious badge of the sovereign head bloodstained beneath the feet of the rabble mourned for its high prerogative; for that is greedily trampled on which before was too much

dreaded.

It would come then in the end to the lees of uttermost disorder, each man seeking for himself empire and sovereignty.

res itaque ad summam faecem turbasque redibat,
imperium sibi cum ac summatum quisque petebat.
inde magistratum partim docuere creare
iuraque constituere, ut vellent legibus uti.

1145 nam genus humanum, defessum vi colere aevom,
ex inimiciis languebat; quo magis ipsum
sponte sua cecidit sub leges artaque iura.
acrius ex ira quod enim se quisque parabat
ulcisci quam nunc concessumst legibus aequis,
1150 hanc ob rem est homines pertaesum vi colere aevom.

inde metus maculat poenarum praemia vitae.
circumretit enim vis atque iniuria quemque
atque unde exortast, ad eum plerumque revertit,
nec facilest placidam ac pacatam degere vitam

1155 qui violat factis communia foedera pacis.
etsi fallit enim divom genus humanumque,
perpetuo tamen id fore clam diffidere debet;
quippe ubi se multi per somnia saepe loquentes
aut morbo delirantes protraxe ferantur

1160 et celata mala in medium et peccata dedisse.

Nunc quae causa deum per magnas numina gentis
pervulgarit et ararum compleverit urbis
suscipiendae curarit sollemnia sacra,
quae nunc in magnis florent sacra rebus locisque,

1165 unde etiam nunc est mortalibus insitus horror,
qui delubra deum nova toto suscitatur orbi
terrarum et festis cogit celebrare diebus,
non ita difficilest rationem reddere verbis.

quippe etenim iam tum divom mortalia saecula

1170 egregias animo facies vigilante videbant
et magis in somnis mirando corporis auctu.

his igitur sensum tribuebant propterea quod
membra movere videbantur vocesque superbas
mittere pro facie praeclara et viribus amplis.

1175 aeternamque dabant vitam, quia semper eorum
subpeditabatur facies et forma manebat,
et tamen omnino quod tantis viribus auctos
non temere ulla vi convinci posse putabant.

fortunisque ideo longe praestare putabant,

1180 quod mortis timor haut quemquam vexaret eorum,

et simul in somnis quia multa et mira videbant
efficere et nullum capere ipsos inde laborem.

[1142] Next a portion of them taught men to elect legal officers, and drew up codes, to induce men to obey the laws.

For mankind, tired out with a life of brute force, lay exhausted from its feuds; and therefore the more readily it submitted of its own freewill to laws and stringent codes.

For as each one moved by anger took measures to avenge himself with more severity than is now permitted by equitable laws, for this reason men grew sick of a life of brute force.

Thence fear of punishment mars the prizes of life; for violence and wrong enclose all who commit them in their meshes and do mostly recoil on him from whom they began; and it is not easy for him who by his deeds transgresses the terms of the public peace to pass a tranquil and a peaceful existence.

For though he eludes God and man, yet he cannot but feel a misgiving that his secret can be kept for ever; seeing that many by speaking in their dreams or in the wanderings of disease have often we are told betrayed themselves and have disclosed their hidden deeds of evil and their sins.

And now what cause has spread over great nations the worship of the divinities of the gods and filled towns with altars and led to the performance of stated sacred rites, rites now in fashion on solemn occasions and in solemn places, from which even now, is implanted in mortals a shuddering awe which raises new temples of the gods over the whole earth and prompts men to crowd them on festive days, all this it is not so difficult to explain in words.

Even then in sooth the races of mortal men would see in waking mind glorious forms, would see them in sleep of yet more marvelous size of body.

To these then they would attribute sense, because they seemed to move their limbs and to utter lofty words suitable to their glorious aspect and surpassing powers.

And they would give them life everlasting, because their face would ever appear before them and their form abide; yes and yet without all this, because they would not believe that beings possessed of such powers could lightly be overcome by any force.

And they would believe them to be preeminent in bliss, because none of them was ever troubled with the fear of death, and because at the same time in sleep they would see them perform many miracles, yet feel on their part no fatigue from the effort.

praeterea caeli rationes ordine certo
et varia annorum cernebant tempora verti
1185 nec poterant quibus id fieret cognoscere causis.
ergo perfugium sibi habebant omnia divis
tradere et illorum nutu facere omnia flecti.

in caeloque deum sedes et templa locarunt,
per caelum volvi quia nox et luna videtur,
1190 luna dies et nox et noctis signa severa
noctivagaeque faces caeli flammaeque volantes,
nubila sol imbres nix venti fulmina grando
et rapidi fremitus et murmura magna minarum.
O genus infelix humanum, talia divis
1195 cum tribuit facta atque iras adiunxit acerbas!
quantos tum gemitus ipsi sibi, quantaque nobis
volnera, quas lacrimas peperere minoribus nostris!
nec pietas ullast velatum saepe videri
vertier ad lapidem atque omnis accedere ad aras
1200 nec procumbere humi prostratum et pandere palmas
ante deum delubra nec aras sanguine multo
spargere quadrupedum nec votis nectere vota,
sed mage pacata posse omnia mente tueri.
nam cum suspicimus magni caelestia mundi
1205 templa super stellisque micantibus aethera fixum,
et venit in mentem solis lunaeque viarum,
tunc aliis oppressa malis in pectora cura
illa quoque expergefatum caput erigere inquit,
ne quae forte deum nobis inmensa potestas
1210 sit, vario motu quae candida sidera verset;
temptat enim dubiam mentem rationis egestas,
ecquae nam fuerit mundi genitalis origo,
et simul ecquae sit finis, quoad moenia mundi
et taciti motus hunc possint ferre laborem,
1215 an divinitus aeterna donata salute
perpetuo possint aevi labentia tractu
inmensi validas aevi contemnere viris.
praeterea cui non animus formidine divum
contrahitur, cui non correpunt membra pavore,
1220 fulminis horribili cum plaga torrida tellus
contremat et magnum percurrunt murmura caelum?
non populi gentesque tremunt, regesque superbi
corripiunt divum percussi membra timore,
ne quod ob admissum foede dictumve superbe
1225 poenarum grave sit solvendi tempus adauctum?
summa etiam cum vis violenti per mare venti
induperatorem classis super aequora verrit
cum validis pariter legionibus atque elephantis,
non divom pacem votis adit ac prece quaesit
1230 ventorum pavidus paces animasque secundas?

[1183] Again they would see the system of heaven and the different seasons of the years come round in regular succession, and could not find out by what causes this was done; therefore they would seek a refuge in handing over all things to the gods and supposing all things to be guided by their nod.

And they placed in heaven the abodes and realms of the gods, because night and moon are seen to roll through heaven, moon day and night and night's austere constellations and night-wandering meteors of the sky and flying bodies of flame, clouds, sun, rains, snow, winds, lightnings, hail, and rapid rumblings and loud threatening thunderclaps.

O hapless race of men, when that they charged the gods with such acts and coupled with them bitter wrath!

What groanings did they then beget for themselves, what wounds for us, what tears for our children's children!

No act is it of piety to be often seen with veiled head to turn to a stone and approach every altar and fall prostrate on the ground and spread out the palms before the statues of the gods and sprinkle the altars with much blood of beasts and link vow on to vow, but rather to be able to look on all things with a mind at peace.

For when we turn our gaze on the heavenly quarters of the great upper world and ether fast above the glittering stars, and direct our thoughts to the courses of the sun and moon, then into our breasts burdened with other ills that fear as well begins to exalt its reawakened head, the fear that we may haply find the power of the gods to be unlimited, able to wheel the bright stars in their varied motion; for lack of power to solve the question troubles the mind with doubts, whether there was ever a birth-time of the world, and whether likewise there is to be any end; how far the walls of the world can endure this strain of restless motion; or whether gifted by the grace of the gods with an everlasting existence they may glide on through a never-ending tract of time and defy the strong powers of immeasurable ages.

Again, who is there whose mind does not shrink into itself with fear of the gods, whose limbs do not cower in terror, when the parched earth rocks with the appalling thunder stroke and rattlings run through the great heaven?

Do not peoples and nations quake, and proud monarchs shrink into themselves smitten with fear of the gods, lest for any foul transgression or overweening word the heavy time of reckoning has arrived at its fulness?

When too the utmost fury of the headstrong wind passes over the sea and sweeps over its waters the commander of a fleet together with his mighty legions and elephants, does he not draw near with vows to seek the mercy of the gods and ask in prayer with fear and trembling a lull in the winds and propitious gales;

ne quiquam, quoniam violento turbine saepe
corruptus nihilo fertur minus ad vada leti.
usque adeo res humanas vis abdita quaedam

opiterit et pulchros fascis saevasque secures
 1235 proculcare ac ludibrio sibi habere videtur.
 denique sub pedibus tellus cum tota vacillat
 concussaeque cadunt urbes dubiaeque minantur,
 quid mirum si se temnunt mortalia saecula
 atque potestatis magnas mirasque relinquunt
 1240 in rebus viris divum, quae cuncta gubernent?
 Quod super est, aes atque aurum ferrumque repertumst
 et simul argenti pondus plumbique potestas,
 ignis ubi ingentis silvas ardore cremarat
 montibus in magnis, seu caelo fulmine misso,
 1245 sive quod inter se bellum silvestre gerentes
 hostibus intulerant ignem formidinis ergo,
 sive quod inducti terrae bonitate volebant
 pandere agros pinguis et pascua reddere rura,
 sive feras interficere et ditescere praeda;
 1250 nam fovea atque igni prius est venarier ortum
 quam saepire plagis saltum canibusque ciere.
 quicquid id est, qua cumque e causa flammeus ardor
 horribili sonitu silvas exederat altis
 a radicibus et terram percoxerat igni,
 1255 manabat venis ferventibus in loca terrae
 concava conveniens argenti rivus et auri,
 aeris item et plumbi. quae cum concreta videbant
 posterius claro in terra splendere colore,
 tollebant nitido capti levique lepore,
 1260 et simili formata videbant esse figura
 atque lacunarum fuerant vestigia cuique.
 tum penetrabat eos posse haec liquefacta calore
 quamlibet in formam et faciem decurrere rerum,
 et prorsum quamvis in acuta ac tenvia posse
 1265 mucronum duci fastigia procudendo,
 ut sibi tela parent silvasque ut caedere possint
 materiemque dolare et levia radere tigna
 et terebrare etiam ac pertundere perque forare.

[1230] but all in vain, since often caught up in the furious hurricane he is borne nonetheless to the shoals of death?

So constantly does some hidden power trample on human grandeur and is seen to tread under its heel and make sport for itself of the renowned rods and cruel axes.

Again, when the whole earth rocks under their feet and towns tumble with the shock or doubtfully threaten to fall, what wonder that mortal men abase themselves and make over to the gods in things hereon earth high prerogatives

and marvelous powers, sufficient to govern all things?

To proceed, copper and gold and iron were discovered and at the same time weighty silver and the substance of lead, when fire with its heat had burnt up vast forests on the great hills, either by a discharge of heaven's lightning, or else because men waging with one another a forest-war had carried fire among the enemy in order to strike terror, or because drawn on by the goodness of the soil they would wish to clear rich fields and bring the country into pasture, or else to destroy wild beasts and enrich themselves with the booty; for hunting with the pitfall and with fire came into use before the practice of enclosing the lawn with toils and stirring it with dogs.

Whatever the fact is, from whatever cause the heat of flame had swallowed up the forests with a frightful crackling from their very roots and had thoroughly baked the earth with fire, there would run from the boiling veins and collect into the hollows of the ground a stream of silver and gold, as well as of copper and lead.

And when they saw these afterwards cool into lumps and glitter on the earth with a brilliant gleam, they would lift them up attracted by the bright and polished luster, and they would see them to be molded in a shape the same as the outline of the cavities in which each lay.

Then it would strike them that these might be melted by heat and cast in any form or shape soever, and might by hammering out be brought to tapering points of any degree of sharpness and fineness, so as to furnish them with tools and enable them to cut the forests and hew timber and plane smooth the planks, and also to drill and pierce and bore.

nec minus argento facere haec auroque parabant

1270 quam validi primum violentis viribus aeris,

ne quiquam, quoniam cedebat victa potestas

nec poterant pariter durum sufferre laborem.

nam fuit in pretio magis aes aurumque iacebat

propter inutilitatem hebeti mucrone retusum;

1275 nunc iacet aes, aurum in summum successit honorem.

sic volvenda aetas commutat tempora rerum.

quod fuit in pretio, fit nullo denique honore;

porro aliud succedit et e contemptibus exit

inque dies magis adpetitur floretque repertum

1280 laudibus et miro est mortalis inter honore.

Nunc tibi quo pacto ferri natura reperta

sit facilest ipsi per te cognoscere, Memmi.

arma antiqua manus ungues dentesque fuerunt

et lapides et item silvarum fragmina rami

1285 et flamma atque ignes, post quam sunt cognita primum.

posterius ferri vis est aerisque reperta.

et prior aeris erat quam ferri cognitus usus,

quo facilis magis est natura et copia maior.
aere solum terrae tractabant, aereque belli
1290 miscebant fluctus et vulnera vasta serebant
et pecus atque agros adimebant; nam facile ollis
omnia cedebant armatis nuda et inerma.
inde minutatim processit ferreus ensis
versaue in obprobrium species est falcis ahenae,
1295 et ferro coepere solum proscindere terrae
exaequataque sunt creperi certamina belli.
et prius est armatum in equi conscendere costas
et moderarier hunc frenis dextraque vigere
quam biugo curru belli temptare pericla.
1300 et biugo prius est quam bis coniungere binos
et quam falciferos armatum escendere currus.
inde boves Lucas turrito corpore, tetras,
anguimanus, belli docuerunt volnera Poeni
sufferre et magnas Martis turbare catervas.
1305 sic alid ex alio peperit discordia tristic,
horribile humanis quod gentibus esset in armis,
inque dies belli terroribus addidit augmen.
Temptarunt etiam tauros in moenere belli
expertique sues saevos sunt mittere in hostis.

[1269] And they would set about these works just as much with silver and gold at first as with the overpowering strength of stout copper, but in vain, since their force would fail and give way and not be able like copper to stand the severe strain.

At that time copper was in higher esteem and gold would lie neglected on account of its uselessness, with its dull blunted edge: now copper lies neglected, gold has mounted up to the highest place of honor.

Thus time as it goes round changes the seasons of things.

That which was in esteem falls at length into utter disrepute; and then another thing mounts up and issues out of its degraded state and every day is more and more coveted and blossoms forth high in honor when discovered and is in marvelous repute with men.

And now, Memmius, it is easy for you to find out by yourself in what way the nature of iron was discovered.

Arms of old were hands nails and teeth and stones and boughs broken off from the forests, and flame and fire, as soon as they had become known.

Afterwards the force of iron and copper was discovered; and the use of copper was known before that of iron, as its nature is easier to work and it is found in greater quantity.

With copper they would labor the soil of the earth, with copper stir up the billows of war and deal about wide-gaping wounds and seize cattle and lands;

for every thing defenseless and unarmed would readily yield to them with arms in hand.

Then by slow steps the sword of iron gained ground and the make of the copper sickle became a byword; and with iron they began to plow through the earth's soil, and the struggles of wavering war were rendered equal.

And the custom of mounting in arms on the back of a horse and guiding him with reins and showing prowess with the right hand is older than that of tempting the risks of war in a two-horsed chariot; and yoking a pair of horses is older than yoking four or mounting in arms scythed chariots.

Next the Poeni taught the lucan kine with towered body, hideous of aspect, with snake-like hand, to endure the wounds of war and to disorder the mighty ranks of Mars.

Thus sad discord begat one thing after another, to affright nations of men under arms, and every day made some addition to the terrors of war.

They made trial of bulls too in the service of war and essayed to send savage boars against the enemy.

1310 et validos partim prae se misere leones
cum doctoribus armatis saevisque magistris,
qui moderarier his possent vinclisque tenere,
ne quiquam, quoniam permixta caede calentes
turbabant saevi nullo discrimine turmas,
1315 terrificas capitum quatientis undique cristas,
nec poterant equites fremitu perterrita equorum
pectora mulcere et frenis convertere in hostis.
inritata leae iaciebant corpora saltu
undique et adversum venientibus ora patebant
1320 et nec opinantis a tergo deripiebant
deplexaeque dabant in terram volnere victos,
morsibus adfixae validis atque unguibus uncis.
iactabantque suos tauri pedibusque terebant
et latera ac ventres hauribant supter equorum
1325 cornibus et terram minitanti mente ruebant.
et validis socios caedebant dentibus apri
tela infracta suo tingentes sanguine saevi
in se fracta suo tingentes sanguine tela,
permixtasque dabant equitum peditumque ruinas.
1330 nam transversa feros exhibant dentis adactus
iumenta aut pedibus ventos erecta petebant,
ne quiquam, quoniam ab nervis succisa videres
concidere atque gravi terram consternere casu.
si quos ante domi domitos satis esse putabant,
1335 effervescere cernebant in rebus agundis
volneribus clamore fuga terrore tumultu,

nec poterant ullam partem reducere eorum;
diffugiebat enim varium genus omne ferarum,
ut nunc saepe boves Lucae ferro male mactae
1340 diffugiunt, fera facta suis cum multa dedere.
Sed facere id non tam vincendi spe voluerunt;
quam dare quod gement hostes, ipsique perire,
qui numero diffidebant armisque vacabant,
si fuit ut facerent. sed vix adducor ut ante
1345 non quierint animo praesentire atque videre,
quam commune malum fieret foedumque, futurum.
et magis id possis factum contendere in omni
in variis mundis varia ratione creatis,
quam certo atque uno terrarum quolibet orbi.
1350 Nexilis ante fuit vestis quam textile tegmen.
textile post ferrumst, quia ferro tela paratur,
nec ratione alia possunt tam levia gigni
insilia ac fusi, radii, scapique sonantes.

[1310] And some sent before them valorous lions with armed trainers and courageous keepers to guide them and to hold them in chains; but in vain, since heated with promiscuous slaughter they would disorder in their rage the troops without distinction, shaking all about the frightful crests upon their heads; and the horsemen were not able to calm the breasts of the horses scared by the roaring and turn them with the bridle upon the enemy.

The lionesses with a spring would throw their enraged bodies on all sides and would attack in the face those who met them, and others off their guard they would tear down from behind and twining round them would bring them to the ground overpowered by the wound, fastening on them with firm bite and with hooked claws.

The bulls would toss their own friends and trample them under foot, and gore with their horns the flanks and bellies of the horses underneath and turn up the earth with threatening front.

The boars too would rend their friends with powerful tusks, in their rage dying with their blood the weapons broken in them, ay dying with their blood the weapons broken in their own bodies; and would put to promiscuous rout horse and foot; for the tame beasts would try to avoid by shying to the side the cruel push of the tusk, or would rear up and paw the winds, all in vain, since you might see them tumble down with their tendons severed and straw the in their heavy fall.

Those whom they believed before to have been sufficiently broken in at home, they would see lash themselves into fury in the heat of action from wounds and shouting, flight panic and uproar; and they could not rally any portion of them; for all the different kinds of wild beasts would fly all abroad; just as now the lucan kine when cruelly mangled by the steel fly often all

abroad, after inflicting on their friends many cruel sufferings.

But men chose thus to act not so much in any hope of victory, as from a wish to give the enemy something to rue at the cost of their own lives, when they mistrusted their numbers and were in want of arms.

A garment tied on the body was in use before a dress of woven stuff.

Woven stuff comes after iron, because iron is needed for weaving a web; and in no other way can such finely polished things be made as heddles and spindles, shuttles and ringing yarn-beams.

And nature impelled men to work up the wool before womankind:

et facere ante viros lanam natura coëgit

1355 quam muliebre genus; nam longe praestat in arte

et sollertius est multo genus omne virile;

agricolae donec vitio vertere severi,

ut muliebribus id manibus concedere vellent

atque ipsi pariter durum sufferre laborem

1360 atque opere in duro durarent membra manusque.

At specimen sationis et insitionis origo

ipsa fuit rerum primum natura creatrix,

arboribus quoniam bacae glandesque caducae

tempestiva dabant pullorum examina supter;

1365 unde etiam libitumst stirpis committere ramis

et nova defodere in terram virgulta per agros.

inde aliam atque aliam culturam dulcis agelli

temptabant fructusque feros mansuescere terra

cernebant indulgendo blandeque colendo.

1370 inque dies magis in montem succedere silvas

cogebant infraque locum concedere cultis,

prata lacus rivos segetes vinetaque laeta

collibus et campis ut haberent, atque olearum

caerula distinguens inter plaga currere posset

1375 per tumulos et convallis camposque profusa;

ut nunc esse vides vario distincta lepore

omnia, quae pomis intersita dulcibus ornant

arbustisque tenent felicibus opsita circum.

At liquidas avium voces imitarier ore

1380 ante fuit multo quam levia carmina cantu

concelebrare homines possent aurisque iuvare.

et zephyri cava per calamorum sibila primum

agrestis docuere cavas inflare cicutas.

inde minutatim dulcis didicere querellas,

1385 tibia quas fundit digitis pulsata canentum,

avia per nemora ac silvas saltusque reperta,

per loca pastorum deserta atque otia dia.

sic unum quicquid paulatim protrahit aetas
in medium ratioque in luminis eruit oras.

1390 haec animos ollis mulcebant atque iuvabant
cum satiate cibi; nam tum sunt omnia cordi.
saepe itaque inter se prostrati in gramine molli
propter aquae rivom sub ramis arboris altae.

non magnis opibus iucunde corpora habebant,

1395 praesertim cum tempestas ridebat et anni
tempora pingebant viridantis floribus herbas.

tum ioca, tum sermo, tum dulces esse cachinni
consuerant; agrestis enim tum musa vigebat.

tum caput atque umeros plexis redimire coronis

1400 floribus et foliis lascivia laeta movebat,

atque extra numerum procedere membra moventes
duriter et duro terram pede pellere matrem;

[1355] for the male sex in general far excels the other in skill and is much more ingenious: until the rugged countrymen so upbraided them with it, that they were glad to give it over into the hands of the women and take their share in supporting hard toil, and in such hard work hardened body and hands.

But nature parent of things was herself the first model of sowing and first gave rise to grafting, since berries and acorns dropping from the trees would put forth in due season swarms of young shoots underneath; and hence also came the fashion of inserting grafts in their stocks and planting in the ground young saplings over the fields.

Next they would try another and yet another kind of tillage for their loved piece of land and would see the earth better the wild fruits through genial fostering and kindly cultivation.

And they would force the forests to recede every day higher and higher up the hill-side and yield, the ground below to tilth, in order to have on the uplands and plains meadows tanks runnels cornfields and glad vineyards, and allow a grey-green strip of olives to run between and mark the divisions, spreading itself over hillocks and valleys and plains; just as you now see richly dight with varied beauty all the ground which they lay out and plant with rows of sweet fruit-trees and enclose all round with plantations of other goodly trees.

But imitating with the mouth the clear notes of birds was in use long before men were able to sing in tune smooth-running verses and give pleasure to the ear.

And the whistlings of the zephyr through the hollows of reeds first taught peasants to blow into hollow stalks.

Then step by step they learned sweet plaintive ditties, which the pipe pours forth pressed by the fingers of the players, heard through pathless woods and forests and lawns, through the unfrequented haunts of shepherds and abodes

of unearthly calm.

These things would soothe and gratify their minds when sated with food; for then all things of this kind are welcome.

Often therefore stretched in groups on the soft grass beside a stream of water under the boughs of a high tree at no great cost they would pleasantly refresh their bodies, above all when 'the weather smiled and the seasons of the year painted the green grass with flowers.

Then went round the jest, the tale, the peals of merry laughter; for the peasant muse was then in its glory; then frolick mirth would prompt to entwine head and shoulders with garlands plaited with flowers and leaves, and to advance in the dance out of step and move the limbs clumsily and with clumsy foot beat mother earth;

unde oriebantur risus dulcesque cachinni,
omnia quod nova tum magis haec et mira vigeant.

1405 et vigilantibus hinc aderant solacia somno
ducere multimodis voces et flectere cantus
et supera calamos unco percurrere labro;
unde etiam vigiles nunc haec accepta tuentur.
et numerum servare genus didicere, neque hilo
1410 maiore interea capiunt dulcedine fructum
quam silvestre genus capiebat terrigenarum.
nam quod adest praesto, nisi quid cognovimus ante
suavius, in primis placet et pollere videtur,
posteriorque fere melior res illa reperta

1415 perdit et immutat sensus ad pristina quaeque.
sic odium coepit glandis, sic illa relictas
strata cubilia sunt herbis et frondibus aucta.
pellis item cecidit vestis contempta ferina;
quam reor invidia tali tunc esse repertam,
1420 ut letum insidiis qui gessit primus obiret,
et tamen inter eos distractam sanguine multo
disperiisse neque in fructum convertere quisse.
tunc igitur pelles, nunc aurum et purpura curis
exercent hominum vitam belloque fatigant;
1425 quo magis in nobis, ut opinor, culpa resedit.
frigus enim nudos sine pellibus excruciat
terrigenas; at nos nil laedit veste carere
purpurea atque auro signisque ingentibus apta,
dum plebeia tamen sit, quae defendere possit.

1430 Ergo hominum genus in cassum frustra laborat
semper et in curis consumit inanibus aevom,
ni mirum quia non cognovit quae sit habendi
finis et omnino quoad crescat vera voluptas;

idque minutatim vitam provexit in altum
1435 et belli magnos commovit funditus aestus.
at vigiles mundi magnum versatile templum
sol et luna suo lustrantes lumine circum
perdocuere homines annorum tempora verti
et certa ratione geri rem atque ordine certo.

[1401] which would occasion smiles and peals of merry laughter, because all these things then from their greater novelty and strangeness were in high repute.

And the wakeful found a solace for want of sleep in this, in drawing out a variety of notes and going through tunes and running over the reeds with curving lip; whence even at the present day watchmen observe these traditions and have lately learned to keep the proper tune; and yet for all this receive not a jot more of enjoyment, than erst the rugged race of sons of earth received.

For that which we have in our hands, if we have known before nothing pleasanter, pleases above all and is thought to be the best; and as a rule the later discovery of something better spoils the taste for the former things and changes the feelings in regard to all that has gone before.

Thus began distaste for the acorn, thus were abandoned those sleeping-places strewn with grass and enriched with leaves.

The dress too of wild beasts' skin fell into neglect; though I can fancy that in those days it was found to arouse such jealousy that he who first wore it met his death by an ambuscade, and after all it was tom in pieces among them and drenched in blood was utterly destroyed and could not be turned to any use.

In those times therefore skins, now gold and purple plague men's lives with cares and wear them out with war.

And in this methinks the greater blame rests with us; for cold would torture the naked sons of earth without, but us it harms not in the least to do without a robe of purple, spangled with gold and large figures, if only we have a dress of the people to protect us.

Mankind therefore ever toils vainly and to no purpose and wastes life in groundless cares because sure enough they have not learnt what is the true end of getting and up to what point genuine pleasure goes on increasing: this by slow degrees has carried life out into the deep sea and stirred up from their lowest depths the mighty billows of war.

But those watchful guardians sun and moon traversing with their light all round the great revolving sphere of heaven taught men that the seasons of the year came round and that the system was carried on after a fixed plan and fixed order.

1440 Iam validis saepti degebant turribus aevom,
et divisa colebatur discretaque tellus,
tum mare velivolis florebat navibus ponti,

auxilia ac socios iam pacto foedere habebant,
carminibus cum res gestas coepere poëtae
1445 tradere; nec multo prius sunt elementa reperta.
propterea quid sit prius actum respicere aetas
nostra nequit, nisi qua ratio vestigia monstrat.
Navigia atque agri culturas moenia leges
arma vias vestes et cetera de genere horum,
1450 praemia, delicias quoque vitae funditus omnis,
carmina, picturas et daedala signa polita
usus et impigrae simul experientia mentis
paulatim docuit pedetemptim progredientis.
sic unum quicquid paulatim protrahit aetas
1455 in medium ratioque in luminis erigit oras;
namque alid ex alio clarescere corde videbant,
artibus ad summum donec venere cacumen.

[1440] Already they would pass their life fenced about with strong towers, and the land, portioned out and marked off by boundaries, be tilled; the sea would be filled with ships scudding under sail; towns have auxiliaries and allies as stipulated by treaty, when poets began to consign the deeds of men to verse; and letters had not been invented long before.

For this reason our age cannot look back to what has gone before save where reason points out any traces.

Ships and tillage, walls, laws, arms, roads, dress, and all such like things, all the prizes, all the elegancies too of life without exception, poems, pictures, and the chiseling of fine-wrought statues, all these things practice together with the acquired knowledge of the untiring mind taught men by slow degrees as they advanced on the way step by step.

Thus time by degrees brings each several thing forth before men's eyes and reason raises it up into the borders of light; for things must be brought to light one after the other and in due order in the different arts until these have reached their highest point of development.

Liber Sextus — BOOK VI.

Primae frugiparos fetus mortalibus aegris
dididerunt quondam praeclaro nomine Athenae
et recreaverunt vitam legesque rogarunt
et primae dederunt solacia dulcia vitae,
5 cum genuere virum tali cum corde repertum,
omnia veridico qui quondam ex ore profudit;
cuius et extincti propter divina reperta
divolgata vetus iam ad caelum gloria fertur.
nam cum vidit hic ad victum quae flagitat usus
10 omnia iam ferme mortalibus esse parata
et, pro quam possent, vitam consistere tutam,
divitiis homines et honore et laude potentis
affluere atque bona gnatorum excellere fama,
nec minus esse domi cuiquam tamen anxia cordi,
15 atque animi ingratis vitam vexare sine ulla
pausa atque infestis cogi saevire querellis,
intellegit ibi vitium vas efficere ipsum
omniaque illius vitio corrumpier intus,
quae conlata foris et commoda cumque venirent;
20 partim quod fluxum pertusumque esse videbat,
ut nulla posset ratione explerier umquam,
partim quod taetro quasi conspurcare sapore
omnia cernebat, quae cumque receperat, intus.
veridicis igitur purgavit pectora dictis
25 et finem statuit cuppedinis atque timoris
exposuitque bonum summum, quo tendimus omnes,
quid foret, atque viam monstravit, tramite parvo

[1] IN days of yore Athens of famous name first imparted corn-producing crops to suffering mankind, and modeled life anew and passed laws; and first too bestowed sweet solaces of existence, when she gave birth to a man who showed himself gifted with such a genius and poured forth all knowledge of old from his truth-telling mouth; whose glory, even now that he is dead, on account of his godlike discoveries confirmed by length of time is spread abroad among men and reaches high as heaven.

For when he saw that the things which their needs imperiously demand for subsistence had all without exception been already provided for men, and that life, so far as was possible, was placed on a sure footing, that men were great in affluence of riches and honors and glory and swelled with pride in the high reputation of their children, and yet that none of them at home for all that had a heart the less disquieted, and that this heart in despite of the understanding

plagued life without any respite and was constrained to rave with distressful complainings, he then perceived that the vessel itself did cause the corruption and that by its corruption all the things that came into it and were gathered from abroad, however salutary were spoilt within it; partly because he saw it to be leaky and full of holes so that it could never by any means be filled full; partly because he perceived that it befouled so to say with a nauseous flavor everything within it which it had taken in.

He therefore cleansed men's breasts with truth-telling precepts and fixed a limit to lust and fear and explained what was the chief good which we all strive to reach, and pointed out the road along which by a short cross-track we might arrive at it in a straightforward course;

qua possemus ad id recto contendere cursu,
quidve mali foret in rebus mortalibus passim,
30 quod fieret naturali varieque volaret
seu casu seu vi, quod sic natura parasset,
et quibus e portis occurri cuique deceret,
et genus humanum frustra plerumque probavit
volvere curarum tristis in pectore fluctus.
35 nam vel uti pueri trepidant atque omnia caecis
in tenebris metuunt, sic nos in luce timemus
inter dum, nihilo quae sunt metuenda magis quam
quae pueri in tenebris pavitant finguntque futura.
hunc igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque necessest
40 non radii solis nec lucida tela diei
discutiant, sed naturae species ratioque.
quo magis inceptum pergam pertexere dictis.
Et quoniam docui mundi mortalia templa
esse et nativo consistere corpore caelum,
45 et quae cumque in eo fiunt fierique necessest
pleraque dissolui, qui restant percipe porro,
quandoquidem semel insignem conscendere curram

* * *

tu mihi supremae praescripta ad candida callis
currenti spatium praemonstra, callida musa
50 Calliope, requies hominum divomque voluptas,
te duce ut insigni capiam cum laude coronam.

* * *

ventorum existant, placentur ut omnia rursum

* * *

quae fuerint, sint placato conversa furore.
cetera quae fieri in terris caeloque tuentur
55 mortales, pavidis cum pendent mentibus saepe
et faciunt animos humilis formidine divom
depressosque premunt ad terram propterea quod
ignorantia causarum conferre deorum
cogit ad imperium res et concedere regnum.
60 quorum operum causas nulla ratione videre
possunt ac fieri divino numine rentur.
nam bene qui didicere deos securum agere aevom,
si tamen interea mirantur qua ratione
quaeque geri possint, praesertim rebus in illis
65 quae supera caput aetheriis cernuntur in oris,
rursus in antiquas referuntur religionis
et dominos acris adsciscunt, omnia posse

[28] he showed too what evils existed in mortal affairs throughout, rising up and manifoldly flying about by a natural –call it chance or force, because nature had so brought it about – and from what gates you must sally out duly to encounter each; and he proved that mankind mostly without cause arouse in their breast the melancholy tumbling billows of cares.

For even as children are flurried and dread all things in the thick darkness, thus we in the daylight fear at times things not a whit more to be dreaded than what children shudder at in the dark and fancy sure to be.

This terror therefore and darkness of mind must be dispelled, not by the rays of the sun and glittering shafts of day, but by the aspect and law of nature.

Wherefore the more readily I will go on in my verses to complete the web of my design.

And since I have shown that the quarters of ether are mortal and that heaven is formed of a body that had a birth, and since of all the things which go on and must go on in it, I have unraveled most, hear further what remains to be told; since once for all [I have willed] to mount the illustrious chariot [of the muses, and ascending to heaven to explain the true law of winds and storms, which men foolishly lay to the charge of the gods, telling how, when they are angry, they raise fierce tempests; and, when there is a lull in the fury] of the winds, how that anger is appeased, how the omens which have been are again changed, when their fury has thus been appeased: [I have willed at the same time] to explain all the other things which mortals observe to go on upon earth and in heaven, when often they are in anxious suspense of mind, and which abase their souls with fear of the gods and weigh and press them down to earth, because ignorance of the causes constrains them to submit things to the empire of the gods and to make over to them the kingdom.

For they who have been rightly taught that the gods lead a life without

care, if nevertheless they wonder on what plan all things can be carried on, above all in regard to those things which are seen overhead in the ethereal borders, are borne back again into their old religious scruples and take unto themselves hard taskmasters, whom they poor wretches believe to be almighty, not knowing what can, what cannot be, in short on what principle each thing has its powers defined, its deep set boundary mark; and therefore they are led all the farther astray by blind reason.

quos miseri credunt, ignari quid queat esse,
quid nequeat, finita potestas denique cuique
70 qua nam sit ratione atque alte terminus haerens;
quo magis errantes caeca ratione feruntur.
quae nisi respuis ex animo longeque remittis
dis indigna putare alienaque pacis eorum,
delibata deum per te tibi numina sancta
75 saepe oberunt; non quo violari summa deum vis
possit, ut ex ira poenas petere inbibat acris,
sed quia tute tibi placida cum pace quietos
constitues magnos irarum volvere fluctus,
nec delubra deum placido cum pectore adibis,
80 nec de corpore quae sancto simulacra feruntur
in mentes hominum divinae nuntia formae,
suscipere haec animi tranquilla pace valebis.
inde videre licet qualis iam vita sequatur.
quam quidem ut a nobis ratio verissima longe
85 reiciat, quamquam sunt a me multa profecta,
multa tamen restant et sunt ornanda politis
versibus; est ratio caeliQUE ignisque tenenda,
sunt tempestates et fulmina clara canenda,
quid faciant et qua de causa cumque ferantur;
90 ne trepides caeli divisis partibus amens,
unde volans ignis pervenerit aut in utram se
verterit hinc partim, quo pacto per loca saepta
insinuarit, et hinc dominatus ut extulerit se.
quorum operum causas nulla ratione videre
95 possunt ac fieri divino numine rentur.
Principio tonitru quatiuntur caerula caeli
propterea quia concurrunt sublime volantes
aetheriae nubes contra pugnantibus ventis.
nec fit enim sonitus caeli de parte serena,
100 verum ubi cumque magis denso sunt agmine nubes,
tam magis hinc magno fremitus fit murmure saepe.
praeterea neque tam condenso corpore nubes
esse queunt quam sunt lapides ac ligna, neque autem

tam tenues quam sunt nebulae fumique volantes;
105 nam cadere aut bruto deberent pondere pressae
ut lapides, aut ut fumus constare nequirent
nec cohibere nives gelidas et grandinis imbris.

[68] Now unless you drive from your mind with loathing all these things, and banish far from you all belief in things degrading to the gods and inconsistent with their peace, then often will the holy deities of the gods, having their majesty lessened by you, do you hurt; not that the supreme power of the gods can be so outraged that in their wrath they shall resolve to exact sharp vengeance, but because you will fancy to yourself that they, though they enjoy quiet and calm peace, do roll great billows of wrath; nor will you approach the sanctuaries of the gods with a calm breast, nor will you be able with tranquil peace of mind to take in those idols which are carried from their holy body into the minds of men as heralds of their divine form.

And what kind of life follows after this, may be conceived.

But in order that most veracious reason may drive it far away from us, though much has already gone forth from me, much however still remains and has to be embellished in smooth-polished verses; the law and aspect of heaven have to be grasped; storms and bright lightnings, what they do and from what cause they are borne along, all this has to be sung; that you may not mark out the heaven into quarters and be startled and distracted on seeing from which of them the volant fire has come or to which of the two halves it has betaken itself, in what way it has gained an entrance within walled places, and how after lording it with tyrant sway, it has gotten itself out from these.

Do thou, deft muse Calliope, solace of men and joy of gods, point out the course before me as I race to the white boundary-line of the final goal, that under thy guidance I may win the crown with signal applause.

In the first place the blue of heaven is shaken with thunder because the ethereal clouds clash together as they fly aloft when the winds combat from opposite quarters.

For no sound ever comes from a cloudless part of heaven, but wheresoever the clouds are gathered in a denser mass, from that part with greater frequency comes a clap with a loud growl.

Again, clouds cannot be either of so dense a body as stones and timbers, nor again so fine as mists and flying bodies of smoke; for then they must either fall borne down by their dead weight like stones, or like smoke they would be unable to keep together and hold within frozen snows and hail showers.

They also give forth a sound over the levels of the wide-stretching upper world, just as at times a canvas-awning stretched over large theaters makes a creaking noise, when it tosses about among the poles and beams;

Dant etiam sonitum patuli super aequora mundi,
carbasus ut quondam magnis intenta theatris

110 dat crepitum malos inter iactata trabesque,
 inter dum perscissa furit petulantibus auris
 et fragilis sonitus chartarum commeditatur;
 id quoque enim genus in tonitru cognoscere possis,
 aut ubi suspensam vestem chartasque volantis
 115 verberibus venti versant planguntque per auras.
 fit quoque enim inter dum ut non tam concurrere nubes
 frontibus adversis possint quam de latere ire
 diverso motu radentes corpora tractim,
 aridus unde auris terget sonus ille diuque
 120 ducitur, exierunt donec regionibus artis.
 Hoc etiam pacto tonitru concussa videntur
 omnia saepe gravi tremere et divolsa repente
 maxima dissiluisse capacis moenia mundi,
 cum subito validi venti conlecta procella
 125 nubibus intorsit sese conclusaque ibidem
 turbine versanti magis ac magis undique nubem
 cogit uti fiat spisso cava corpore circum,
 post ubi conminuit vis eius et impetus acer,
 tum perterricrepto sonitu dat scissa fragorem.
 130 nec mirum, cum plena animae vensicula parva
 saepe haud dat parvum sonitum displosa repente.
 Est etiam ratio, cum venti nubila perflant,
 ut sonitus faciant; etenim ramosa videmus
 nubila saepe modis multis atque aspera ferri;
 135 scilicet ut, crebram silvam cum flamina cauri
 perflant, dant sonitum frondes ramique fragorem.
 Fit quoque ut inter dum validi vis incita venti
 perscindat nubem perfringens impete recto;
 nam quid possit ibi flatus manifesta docet res,
 140 hic, ubi lenior est, in terra cum tamen alta
 arbusta evolvens radicibus haurit ab imis.
 sunt etiam fluctus per nubila, qui quasi murmur
 dant in frangendo graviter; quod item fit in altis
 fluminibus magnoque mari, cum frangitur aestus.
 145 Fit quoque, ubi e nubi in nubem vis incidit ardens
 fulminis; haec multo si forte umore recepit
 ignem, continuo magno clamore trucidat;

[110] sometimes too rent by the boisterous gales it madly howls and closely imitates the rasping noise of pieces of paper: for this kind of noise too you may observe in thunder: you may observe again the sound which is heard when the winds whirl about with their blows and buffet through the air either a hanging cloth or flying bits of paper.

For sometimes the clouds cannot meet front to front indirect collision, but must rather move from the flank and so with contrary motions graze leisurely along each other's bodies; whence comes that dry sound which brushes the ears and is long drawn out, until they have made their way out of their confined positions.

In this way also all things appear to quake often from the shock of heavy thunder, and the mighty walls of the far stretching ether seem in an instant to have been riven and to have sprung asunder; when a storm of violent wind has suddenly gathered and worked itself into the clouds and, there shut in, with its whirling eddy ever more and more on all sides forces the cloud to become hollow with a thick surrounding crust of body; afterwards when its force and impetuous onset have split it, then the cloud thus rent gives forth a crash with a frightful hurtling noise.

And no wonder, when a small bladder filled with air often emits a hideous sound if suddenly burst.

It can also be explained how the winds, when they blow through the clouds, make noises: we see branching and rough clouds often borne along in many ways; thus, you are to know, when the blasts of the northwest blow through a dense forest, the leaves give forth a rustling and the boughs a crashing.

Sometimes too the force of the strong wind in rapid motion rends the cloud, breaking through it by an assault right in front: what a blast of wind can do there, is shown by facts plain to sense, when hereon earth where it is gentler it yet twists out tall trees and tears them up from their deepest roots.

There are also waves among the clouds and they give a kind of roar as they break heavily; just as in deep rivers and on the great sea when the surf breaks.

Sometimes too when the burning force of thunder has fallen out of one cloud into another, if haply the latter contains much moisture when it has taken the fire into it, it drowns it at once with a loud noise;

ut calidis candens ferrum e fornacibus olim
stridit, ubi in gelidum propter demersimus imbrem.

150 Aridior porro si nubes accipit ignem,

uritur ingenti sonitu succensa repente,

lauricomos ut si per montis flamma vagetur

turbine ventorum comburens impete magno;

nec res ulla magis quam Phoebi Delphica laurus

155 terribili sonitu flamma crepitante crematur.

Denique saepe geli multus fragor atque ruina

grandinis in magnis sonitum dat nubibus alte;

ventus enim cum confercit, franguntur in artum

concreti montes nimborum et grandine mixti.

160 Fulgit item, nubes ignis cum semina multa

excussere suo concursu, ceu lapidem si

percutiat lapis aut ferrum; nam tum quoque lumen
exilit et claras scintillas dissipat ignis.
sed tonitrum fit uti post auribus accipiamus,
165 fulgere quam cernant oculi, quia semper ad auris
tardius adveniunt quam visum quae moveant res.
id licet hinc etiam cognoscere: caedere si quem
ancipiti videas ferro procul arboris auctum,
ante fit ut cernas ictum quam plaga per auris
170 det sonitum; sic fulgorem quoque cernimus ante
quam tonitrum accipimus, pariter qui mittitur igni
e simili causa, concursu natus eodem.
Hoc etiam pacto volucris loca lumine tingunt
nubes et tremulo tempestas impete fulgit.
175 ventus ubi invasit nubem et versatus ibidem
fecit ut ante cavam docui spissescere nubem,
mobilitate sua fervescit; ut omnia motu
percalefacta vides ardescere, plumbea vero
glans etiam longo cursu volvenda liquescit.
180 ergo fervidus hic nubem cum perscidit atram,
dissipat ardoris quasi per vim expressa repente
semina, quae faciunt nictantia fulgura flammae;
inde sonus sequitur, qui tardius adlicit auris
quam quae perveniunt oculorum ad lumina nostra.

[148] just so iron glowing hot from the fiery furnaces sometimes hisses when we have plunged it quickly into cold water.

Again if the cloud which receives the fire is drier, it is set on fire in an instant and burns with a loud noise; just as if a flame should range over the laurel-covered hills through a whirlwind and burn them up with its impetuous assault; and there is not anything that burns in the crackling flame with a more startling sound than the Delphic laurel of Phoebus.

Then often too much crashing of ice and tumbling in of hail make a noise in the great clouds on high; for when the wind packs them together into a confined space, the mountains of storm-clouds congealed and mixed with hail break up.

It lightens too, when the clouds have struck out by their collision many seeds of fire; just as if a stone were to strike another stone or a piece of iron; for then too light bursts out and fire scatters about bright sparks.

But we hear the thunder with our ears after the eyes see the flash of lightning, because things always travel more slowly to the ears than those which excite vision travel to the eyes.

This you may perceive from the following instance as well: when you see a man at a distance cutting with a double-edged axe a large tree, you perceive the stroke before the blow carries the sound to the ear: thus we see lightning

too before we hear the thunder, which is discharged at the same time as the fire from the same cause, being born indeed from the same collision.

Also in the following manner clouds dye places with winged light and the storm flashes out with a rapid quivering movement.

When the wind has made its way into a cloud and whirling about in it has, as I have shown above, made the cloud hollow with a dense crust, it becomes hot by its own velocity: thus you see all things thoroughly heated and fired by motion; nay a leaden ball in whirling through along course even melts.

When therefore this wind now on fire has rent the black cloud, it scatters abroad at once seeds of fire pressed out by force so to speak, and these produce the throbbing flashes of flame; then follows a sound which strikes on the ears more slowly than the things which travel to our eyes strike on them.

This you are to know takes place when the clouds are dense and at the same time piled up on high one above the other in marvelous accumulation;

185 scilicet hoc densis fit nubibus et simul alte
extractis aliis alias super impete miro.
ne tibi sit frudi quod nos inferne videmus
quam sint lata magis quam sursum extracta quid extent.

contemplator enim, cum montibus adsimulata
190 nubila portabunt venti transversa per auras,
aut ubi per magnos montis cumulata videbis
insuper esse aliis alia atque urgere superna
in statione locata sepultis undique ventis;
tum poteris magnas moles cognoscere eorum
195 speluncasque vel ut saxis pendentibus structas
cernere, quas venti cum tempestate coorta
conplerunt, magno indignantur murmure clausi
nubibus in caveisque ferarum more minantur,
nunc hinc nunc illinc fremitus per nubila mittunt,
200 quaerentesque viam circum versantur et ignis
semina convolvunt e nubibus atque ita cogunt
multa rotantque cavis flammam fornacibus intus,
donec divolsa fulserunt nube corusci.

Hac etiam fit uti de causa mobilis ille
205 devolet in terram liquidi color aureus ignis,
semina quod nubes ipsas permulta necessust
ignis habere; etenim cum sunt umore sine ullo,
flammeus est plerumque colos et splendidus ollis.
quippe etenim solis de lumine multa necessest
210 concipere, ut merito rubeant ignesque profundant.
hasce igitur cum ventus agens contrusit in unum
compressitque locum cogens, expressa profundunt
semina, quae faciunt flammae fulgere colores.

Fulgit item, cum rarescunt quoque nubila caeli;
215 nam cum ventus eas leviter diducit euntis
dissoluitque, cadant ingratus illa necessest
semina quae faciunt fulgorem. tum sine taetro
terrore atque sonis fulgit nulloque tumultu.
Quod superest, quali natura praedita constant
220 fulmina, declarant ictus et inusta vaporis
signa notaeque gravis halantis sulphuris auras;
ignis enim sunt haec non venti signa neque imbris.
praeterea saepe accendunt quoque tecta domorum
et celeri flamma dominantur in aedibus ipsis.
225 hunc tibi subtilem cum primis ignibus ignem
constituit natura minutis mobilibusque
corporibus, cui nil omnino obsistere possit.

[186] that you be not led into error, because we see how great their breadth is below, rather than to how great a height they are piled up.

Observe, at a time when the winds shall carry clouds like to mountains with a slanting course through the air, or when you shall see them piled on the sides of great mountains one on the top of the other and pressing down from above perfectly at rest, the winds being buried on all sides.

You will then be able to observe their great masses and to see caverns as it were built of hanging rocks; and when a storm has gathered and the winds have filled these, they chafe with aloud roaring shut up in the clouds, and bluster in their dens after the fashion of wild beasts: now from this point, now from that the winds send their growlings through the clouds, and seeking a way outwhirl about and roll together seeds of fire out of the clouds and then gather many into a mass and make flame rotate in the hollow furnaces within, until they have burst the cloud and shone forth in forked flashes.

From this cause again yon golden color of clear bright fire flies down with velocity to the earth: the clouds must themselves have very many seeds of fire; for when they are without any moisture, they are mostly of a brilliant flame color.

Moreover they must take in many from the sun's light, so that with good cause they are ruddy and shed forth fires.

When therefore the wind has driven thrust squeezed together and collected into one spot these clouds, they press out and shed forth seeds which cause the colors of flame to flash out.

It also lightens when the clouds of heaven are rarefied as well.

For when the wind lightly unravels them and breaks them up as they move, those seeds which produce the lightning must fall perforce; and then it lightens without a hideous startling noise and without any uproar.

Well, to proceed, what kind of nature thunderbolts possess, is shown by their strokes and the traces of their heat which have burnt themselves into

things and the marks which exhale the noxious vapors of sulfur: all these are signs of fire, not of wind or rain.

Again they often set on fire even the roofs of houses and with swift flame rule resistless within the house.

This fire subtle above all fires nature, you are to know, forms of minute and lightly moving bodies, and it is such as nothing whatever can withstand.

transit enim validum fulmen per saepta domorum
clamor ut ac voces, transit per saxa, per aera
230 et liquidum puncto facit aes in tempore et aurum.

curat item vasis integris vina repente
diffugiant, quia ni mirum facile omnia circum
conlaxat rareque facit lateramina vasis
adveniens calor eius et insinuatus in ipsum
235 mobiliter soluens differt primordia vini.
quod solis vapor aetatem non posse videtur
efficere usque adeo pollens fervore corusco.
tanto mobilior vis et dominantior haec est.
Nunc ea quo pacto gignantur et impete tanto

240 fiant ut possint ictu discludere turris,
disturbare domos, avellere tigna trabesque
et monimenta virum commoliri atque ciere,
exanimare homines, pecudes prosternere passim,
cetera de genere hoc qua vi facere omnia possint,
245 expediam neque te in promissis plura morabor.

Fulmina gignier e crassis alteque putandumst
nubibus exstructis; nam caelo nulla sereno
nec leviter densis mittuntur nubibus umquam.
nam dubio procul hoc fieri manifesta docet res;

250 quod tunc per totum concrescunt aëra nubes,
undique uti tenebras omnis Acherunta reamur
liquisse et magnas caeli complesse cavernas,
Æusque adeo tetra nimborum nocte coorta
inpendent atrae formidinis ora superne, Æ
255 cum commoliri tempestas fulmina coepat.

praeterea persaepe niger quoque per mare nimbus,
ut picis e caelo demissum flumen, in undas
sic cadit effertus tenebris procul et trahit atram
fulminibus gravidam tempestatem atque procellis,

260 ignibus ac ventis cum primis ipse repletus,
in terra quoque ut horrescant ac tecta requirant.
sic igitur supera nostrum caput esse putandumst
tempestatem altam; neque enim caligine tanta
obruerent terras, nisi inaedificata superne

265 multa forent multis exempto nubila sole;
nec tanto possent venientes opprimere imbri,
flumina abundare ut facerent camposque natare,
si non extructis foret alte nubibus aether.
hic igitur ventis atque ignibus omnia plena
270 sunt; ideo passim fremitus et fulgura fiunt.

[228] The mighty thunderbolt passes through the walls of houses, like a shout and voices, passes through stones, through brass, and in a moment of time melts brass and gold; and causes wine too in an instant to disappear, while the vessels are untouched, because sure enough its heat on reaching it readily loosens and rarefies all the earthen material of the vessel on every side and forcing a way within lightly separates and disperses the first-beginnings of the wine.

This the sun's heat would be unable to accomplish in an age, though beating on it incessantly with its quivering heat: so much more nimble and overpowering is this other force.

And now in what way these are begotten and are formed with a force so resistless as to be able with their stroke to burst asunder towers, throw down houses, wrench away beams and rafters, and cast down and burn up the monuments of men, to strike men dead, prostrate cattle far and near, by what force they can do all this and the like, I will make clear and will not longer detain you with mere professions.

Thunderbolts we must suppose to be begotten out of dense clouds piled up high; for they are never sent forth at all when the sky is clear or when the clouds are of a slight density.

That this is so beyond all question is proved by facts evident to sense: clouds at such times form so dense a mass over the whole sky that we might imagine all its darkness had abandoned Acheron throughout and filled up the great vaults of heaven: in such numbers, gathering up out of the frightful night of storm clouds, do faces of black horror hang over us on high; what time the storm begins to forge its thunderbolts.

Very often again a black storm-cloud too out at sea, like a stream of pitch sent down from heaven, falls in such wise upon the waters heavily charged with darkness afar off and draws down a black tempest big with lightnings and storms, itself so fraught above all the rest with fires and winds, that even on land men shudder and seek shelter.

Thus then we must suppose that the storm above our head reaches high up; for the clouds would never bury the earth in such thick darkness, unless they were built up high heap upon heap, the sunlight totally disappearing; nor could the clouds when they descend drown it with so great a rain, as to make rivers overflow and put fields under water, if they were not piled high up in the sky.

In this case then all things are filled with winds and fire; therefore

thunderings and lightnings go on all about.

quippe etenim supra docui permulta vaporis
semina habere cavas nubes et multa necessest
concipere ex solis radiis ardoreque eorum.
hoc ubi ventus eas idem qui cogit in unum
275 forte locum quemvis, expressit multa vaporis
semina seque simul cum eo commiscuit igni,
insinuatus ibi vortex versatur in arto
et calidis acuit fulmen fornacibus intus;
nam duplici ratione accenditur: ipse sua cum
280 mobilitate calescit et e contagibus ignis.
inde ubi percaluit venti vis et gravis ignis
impetus incessit, maturum tum quasi fulmen
perscindit subito nubem ferturque coruscis
omnia luminibus lustrans loca percitus ardor.
285 quem gravis insequitur sonitus, displosa repente
opprimere ut caeli videantur templa superne.
inde tremor terras graviter pertemptat et altum
murmura percurrunt caelum; nam tota fere tum
tempestas concussa tremit fremitusque moventur.
290 quo de concussu sequitur gravis imber et uber,
omnis uti videatur in imbrem vertier aether
atque ita praecipitans ad diluvium revocare;
tantus discidio nubis ventique procella
mittitur, ardenti sonitus cum provolat ictu.
295 Est etiam cum vis extrinsecus incita venti
incidit in validam maturo culmine nubem;
quam cum perscidit, extemplo cadit igneus ille
vertex, quem patrio vocitamus nomine fulmen.
hoc fit idem in partis alias, quo cumque tulit vis.
300 Fit quoque ut inter dum venti vis missa sine igni
igniscat tamen in spatio longoque meatu,
dum venit amittens in cursu corpora quaedam
grandia, quae nequeunt pariter penetrare per auras,
atque alia ex ipso conradens aeëre portat
305 parvola, quae faciunt ignem commixta volando;
non alia longe ratione ac plumbea saepe
fervida fit glans in cursu, cum multa rigoris
corpora dimittens ignem concepit in auris.
Fit quoque ut ipsius plagae vis excitet ignem,
310 frigida cum venti pepulit vis missa sine igni,
ni mirum quia, cum vehementi perculit ictu,
confluere ex ipso possunt elementa vaporis

et simul ex illa quae tum res excipit ictum;

[271] For I have shown above that hollow clouds have very many seeds of heat, and they must also take many in from the sun's rays and their heat.

On this account when the same wind which happens to collect them into any one place, has forced out many seeds of heat and has mixed itself up with that fire, then the eddy of wind forces a way in and whirls about in the straitened room and points the thunderbolt in the fiery furnaces within; for it is kindled in two ways at once: it is heated by its own velocity and from the contact of fire.

After that when the force of the wind has been thoroughly heated and the impetuous power of the fire has entered in, then the thunderbolt fully forged as it were suddenly rends the cloud, and the heat put in motion is carried on traversing all places with flashing lights.

Close upon it falls so heavy a clap that it seems to crush down from above the quarters of heaven which have all at once sprung asunder.

Then a trembling violently seizes the earth and rumblings run through high heaven; for the whole body of the storm then without exception quakes with the shock and loud roarings are aroused.

After this shock follows so heavy and copious a rain that the whole ether seems to be turning into rain and then to be tumbling down and returning to a deluge: so great a flood of it is discharged by the bursting of the cloud and the storm of wind, when the sound flies forth from the burning stroke.

At times too the force of the wind set in motion from without falls on a cloud hot with a fully forged thunderbolt; and when it has burst it, forthwith there falls down yon fiery eddying whirl which in our native speech we call a thunderbolt.

The same takes place on every other side towards which the force in question has borne down.

Sometimes too the power of the wind though discharged without fire, yet catches fire in the course of its long travel, and while it is passing on, it loses on the way some large bodies which cannot like the rest get through the air; and gathers together out of the air itself and carries along with it other bodies of very small size which mix with it and produce fire by their flight; very much in the same way as a leaden ball becomes hot during its course, when it loses many bodies of cold and has taken up fire in the air.

Sometimes too the force of the blow itself strikes out fire, when the force of wind discharged in a cold state without fire has struck, because sure enough, when it has smitten with a powerful stroke, the elements of heat are able to stream together out of the wind itself and at the same time out of the thing which then encounters the stroke.

ut, lapidem ferro cum caedimus, evolat ignis,
315 nec, quod frigida vis ferrist, hoc setius illi
semina concurrunt calidi fulgoris ad ictum.

sic igitur quoque res accendi fulmine debet,
 opportuna fuit si forte et idonea flammis.
 nec temere omnino plane vis frigida venti
 320 esse potest, ea quae tanta vi missa supernest,
 quin, prius in cursu si non accenditur igni,
 at tepefacta tamen veniat commixta calore.
 Mobilitas autem fit fulminis et gravis ictus
 et celeri ferme percurrunt fulmina lapsu,
 325 nubibus ipsa quod omnino prius incita se vis
 colligit et magnum conamen sumit eundi,
 inde ubi non potuit nubes capere inpetis auctum,
 exprimitur vis atque ideo volat impete miro,
 ut validis quae de tormentis missa feruntur.
 330 Adde quod e parvis et levibus est elementis,
 nec facilest tali naturae obsistere quicquam;
 inter enim fugit ac penetrat per rara viarum,
 non igitur multis offensibus in remorando
 haesitat, hanc ob rem celeri volat impete labens.
 335 Deinde, quod omnino natura pondera deorsum
 omnia nituntur, cum plagast addita vero,
 mobilitas duplicatur et impetus ille gravescit,
 ut vehementius et citius quae cumque morantur
 obvia discutiat plagis itinerque sequatur.
 340 Denique quod longo venit impete, sumere debet
 mobilitatem etiam atque etiam, quae crescit eundo
 et validas auget viris et roborat ictum;
 nam facit ut quae sint illius semina cumque
 e regione locum quasi in unum cuncta ferantur,
 345 omnia coniciens in eum volventia cursum.
 Forsitan ex ipso veniens trahat aeëre quaedam
 corpora, quae plagis incendunt mobilitatem.
 incolumisque venit per res atque integra transit
 multa, foraminibus liquidus quia transviat ignis.

[313] Thus, when we strike a stone with iron, fire flies out; and none the less, because the force of the iron is cold, do its seeds of fiery brightness meet together upon the stroke.

Therefore in the same way too a thing ought to beset on fire by the thunderbolt, if it has happened to be in a state suited to receive and susceptible of the flames.

At the same time the might of the wind cannot lightly be thought to be absolutely and decidedly cold, seeing that it is discharged with such force from above; but if it is not already set on fire during its course, it yet arrives in a warm state with heat mixed up in it.

But the velocity of thunderbolts is great and their stroke powerful, and they run through their course with a rapid descent, because their force when set in motion first in all cases collects itself in the clouds and gathers itself up for a great effort at starting; then when the cloud is no longer able to hold the increased moving power, their force is pressed out and therefore flies with a marvelous moving power, like to that with which missiles are carried when discharged from powerful engines.

Then too the thunderbolt consists of small and smooth elements, and such a nature it is not easy for anything to withstand; for it flies between and passes in through the porous passages; therefore it is not checked and delayed by many collisions, and for this reason it glides and flies on with a swift moving power.

Next, all weights without exception naturally pressing downward, when to this a blow is added, the velocity is doubled and yon moving power becomes so intense that the thunderbolt dashes aside more impetuously and swiftly whatever gets in its way and tries to hinder it, and pursues its journey.

Then too as it advances with a long-continued moving power, it must again and again receive new velocity which ever increases as it goes on and augments its powerful might and gives vigor to its stroke; for it forces all the seeds of the thunder to be borne right onward to one spot so to speak, throwing them all together, as on they roll, into that single line.

Perhaps too as it goes on it attracts certain bodies out of the air itself, and these by their blows kindle apace its velocity.

It passes too through things without injuring them, and leaves many things quite whole after it has gone through, because the clear bright fire flies through by the pores.

350 multaque perfringit, cum corpora fulminis ipsa
corporibus rerum inciderunt, qua texta tenentur.
dissoluit porro facile aes aurumque repente
conferve facit, e parvis quia facta minute
corporibus vis est et levibus ex elementis,
355 quae facile insinuantur et insinuata repente
dissoluunt nodos omnis et vincla relaxant.
Autumnoque magis stellis fulgentibus alta
concutitur caeli domus undique totaque tellus,
et cum tempora se veris florentia pandunt.
360 frigore enim desunt ignes ventique calore
deficiunt neque sunt tam denso corpore nubes.
interutrasque igitur cum caeli tempora constant,
tum variae causae concurrunt fulminis omnes.
nam fretus ipse anni permiscet frigus ad aestum.
365 quorum utrumque opus est fabricanda ad fulmina nubi,
ut discordia sit rerum magnoque tumultu

ignibus et ventis furibundus fluctuet acēr.
prima caloris enim pars est postrema rigoris;
tempus id est vernum; quare pugnare necessest
370 dissimilis res inter se turbareque mixtas.
et calor extremus primo cum frigore mixtus
volvitur, autumnī quod fertur nomine tempus,
hic quoque confligunt hiemes aestatibus acres.
propterea freta sunt haec anni nominanda,
375 nec mirumst, in eo si tempore plurima fiunt
fulmina tempestasque cietur turbida caelo,
ancipiti quoniam bello turbatur utrimque,
hinc flammis, illinc ventis umoreque mixto.
Hoc est igniferi naturam fulminis ipsam
380 perspicere et qua vi faciat rem quamque videre,
non Tyrrhena retro volventem carmina frustra
indicia occultae divum perquirere mentis,
unde volans ignis pervenerit aut in utram se
verterit hinc partim, quo pacto per loca saepta
385 insinuarit, et hinc dominatus ut extulerit se,
quidve nocere queat de caelo fulminis ictus.
quod si Iuppiter atque alii fulgentia divi
terrifico quatiunt sonitu caelestia templa
et iaciunt ignem quo cuiquest cumque voluntas,
390 cur quibus incautum scelus aversabile cumquest
non faciunt icti flammās ut fulguris halent

[350] And it breaks to pieces many things, when the first bodies of the thunderbolt have fallen exactly on the first bodies of these things, at the points where they are intertwined and held together.

Again it easily melts brass and fuses gold in an instant, because its force is formed of bodies minutely small and of smooth elements, which easily make their way in and when they are in, in a moment break up all the knots and untie the bonds of union.

And more especially in autumn the mansion of heaven studded with glittering stars and the whole earth are shaken on all sides, and also when the flowery season of spring discloses itself.

For during the cold fires are wanting and winds fail during the heat, and the clouds then are not of so dense a body.

When therefore the seasons of heaven are between the two extremes, the different causes of thunder and lightning all combine; for the very cross-current of the year mixes up cold and heat, both of which a cloud needs for forging thunderbolts; so that there is great discord in things and the air raving with fires and winds heaves in mighty disorder.

The first part of heat and the last of cold is the spring-time; therefore unlike

things must battle with one another and be turbulent when mixed together.

And when the last heat mixed with the first cold rolls on its course, a time which goes by the name of autumn, then too fierce winters are in conflict with summers.

Therefore these seasons are to be called the cross-seas of the year; and it is not wonderful that in that season thunderbolts are most frequent and troublous storms are stirred up in heaven; since both sides then engage in the troublous medley of dubious war, the one armed with flames, the other with winds and water commingled.

This is the way to see into the true nature of the thunderbolt and to understand by what force it produces each effect, and not the turning over the scrolls of Tyrrhene charms and vainly searching for tokens of the hidden will of the gods, in order to know from what quarter the volant fire has come or to which of the two halves it has betaken itself, in what way it has gained an entrance within walled places, and how after lording it with tyrant sway it has gotten itself out from these; also what harm the thunderstroke from heaven can do.

But if Jupiter and other gods shake with an appalling crash the glittering quarters of heaven, and hurl their fire whither each is so minded, why strike they not those whoever they be who have recked not of committing some abominable sin and make them give forth the flames of lightning from breast pierced through and through, a sharp lesson to men?

pectore prefixo, documen mortalibus acre,
et potius nulla sibi turpi conscius in re
volvitur in flammis innoxius inque peditur
395 turbine caelesti subito correptus et igni?
cur etiam loca sola petunt frustra laborant?
an tum brachia consuescunt firmantque lacertos?
in terraque patris cur telum perpetiuntur
optundi? cur ipse sinit neque parcat in hostis?
400 denique cur numquam caelo iacit undique puro
Iuppiter in terras fulmen sonitusque profundit?
an simul ac nubes successere, ipse in eas tum
descendit, prope ut hinc teli determinet ictus?
in mare qua porro mittit ratione? quid undas
405 arguit et liquidam molem camposque natantis?
praeterea si vult caveamus fulminis ictum,
cur dubitat facere ut possimus cernere missum?
si nec opinantis autem volt opprimere igni,
cur tonat ex illa parte, ut vitare queamus,
410 cur tenebras ante et fremitus et murmura concit?
et simul in multas partis qui credere possis
mittere? an hoc ausis numquam contendere factum,

ut fierent ictus uno sub tempore plures?
at saepe numero factum fierique necessest,
415 ut plueret in multis regionibus et cadere imbris,
fulmina sic uno fieri sub tempore multa.
postremo cur sancta deum delubra suasque
discutit infesto praeclaras fulmine sedes
et bene facta deum frangit simulacra suisque
420 demit imaginibus violento vulnere honorem?
altaque cur plerumque petit loca plurimaque eius
montibus in summis vestigia cernimus ignis?
Quod super est, facilest ex his cognoscere rebus,
presteras Graii quos ab re nominatarunt,
425 in mare qua missi veniant ratione superne.
nam fit ut inter dum tam quam demissa columna
in mare de caelo descendat, quam freta circum
fervescunt graviter spirantibus incita flabris,
et quae cumque in eo tum sint deprensa tumultu
430 navigia in summum veniant vexata periculum.
hoc fit ubi inter dum non quit vis incita venti
rumpere quam coepit nubem, sed deprimit, ut sit
in mare de caelo tam quam demissa columna,
paulatim, quasi quid pugno brachchique superne
435 coniectu trudatur et extendatur in undas;

[392] And why rather is he whose conscience is burdened with no foul offense, innocent though he be, wrapped and enveloped in the flames, in a moment caught up by the whirlwind and fire of heaven?

Why too aim they at solitary spots and spend their labor in vain? Or are they then practicing their arms and strengthening their sinews? And why do they suffer the father's bolt to be blunted on the earth?

Why does he allow it himself, and not spare it for his enemies? Why again, when heaven is unclouded on all sides, does Jupiter never hurl a bolt on the earth or send abroad his claps? Or does he, so soon as clouds have spread under, then go down in person into them, that from them he may aim the strokes of his bolt near at hand?

Ay and for what reason does he hurl into the sea? Of what has he to impeach its waters and liquid mass and floating fields?

Again, if he wills us to avoid the thunderstroke, why fears he to let us see it discharged? Or if he wills to crush us off our guard with his fire, why thunders he from that side, to enable us to shun it? Why stirs he up beforehand darkness and roarings and rumblings? And how can you believe that he hurls at many points at the same time?

Or would you venture to maintain that it never has happened that more than one stroke was made at one time?

Nay often and often it has happened and must happen that, even as it rains and showers fall in many different quarters, so many thunderings go on at one time.

Once more why does he dash down the holy sanctuaries of the gods and his own gorgeous seats with the destroying thunderbolt, and break the fine-wrought idols of the gods, and spoil his own images of their glory by an overbearing wound? And why does he mostly aim at lofty spots, and why do we see most traces of his fire on the mountain tops?

To proceed, it is easy from these facts to understand in what way those things, which the Greeks from their nature have named *presteres*, come down from above into the sea.

For sometimes a pillar so to speak is let down from heaven and descends into the sea, and round about it the surges boil, stirred up by heavy blasts of winds; and all ships caught in that turmoil are dashed about and brought into extreme danger.

This takes place when at times the force of the wind put in motion cannot burst the cloud which it essays to burst, but weighs it down, so that it is like a pillar let down from heaven into the sea, yet gradually, just as if a thing were thrust down from above and stretched out to the level of the waters by the fist and push of the arm;

quam cum discidit, hinc prorumpitur in mare venti
vis et fervorem mirum concinnat in undis;
versabundus enim turbo descendit et illam
deducit pariter lento cum corpore nubem;

440 quam simul ac gravidam detrussit ad aequora ponti,
ille in aquam subito totum se inmittit et omne
excitat ingenti sonitu mare fervere cogens.

Fit quoque ut involvat venti se nubibus ipse
vertex conradens ex aeëre semina nubis

445 et quasi demissum caelo pretera imitetur;
hic ubi se in terras demisit dissoluitque,
turbinis immanem vim provomit atque procellae.

sed quia fit raro omnino montisque necessest
officere in terris, apparet crebrius idem

450 prospectu maris in magno caeloque patenti.
Nubila concrescunt, ubi corpora multa volando
hoc super in caeli spatio coiere repente
asperiora, modis quae possint indupedita
exiguis tamen inter se compressa teneri.

455 haec faciunt primum parvas consistere nubes;
inde ea comprehendunt inter se conque gregantur
et coniungendo crescunt ventisque feruntur
usque adeo donec tempestas saeva coortast.

Fit quoque uti montis vicina cacumina caelo
460 quam sint quoque magis, tanto magis edita fument
adsidue fulvae nubis caligine crassa
propterea quia, cum consistunt nubila primum,
ante videre oculi quam possint tenvia, venti
portantes cogunt ad summa cacumina montis;
465 hic demum fit uti turba maiore coorta
et condensa queant apparere et simul ipso
vertice de montis videantur surgere in aethram.
nam loca declarat sursum ventosa patere
res ipsa et sensus, montis cum ascendimus altos.

[436] and when the force of the wind has rent this cloud, it bursts out from it into the sea and occasions a marvelous boiling in the waters; for the whirling eddy descends and brings down together with it yon cloud of limber body; and as soon as it has forced it down full-charged as it is to the levels of the sea, the eddy in a moment plunges itself entire into the water, and stirs up the whole sea with a prodigious noise and forces it to boil.

Sometimes too the eddy of wind wraps itself up in clouds and gathers out of the air seeds of cloud and imitates in a sort the prester let down from heaven.

When this prester has let itself down to the land and has burst, it belches forth a whirlwind and storm of enormous violence; but as it seldom takes place at all and as mountains cannot but obstruct it on land, it is seen more frequently on the sea with its wide prospect and unobstructed horizon.

Clouds are formed, when in this upper space of heaven many bodies flying about have in some one instant met together, of a rougher sort, such as are able, though they have got the very slightest holds of each other, to catch together and be held in union.

These bodies first cause small clouds to form; and these next catch together and collect into masses and increase by joining with each other and are carried on by the winds continually until a fierce storm has gathered.

The nearer too the tops of a mountain in each case are to heaven, the more constantly at this elevation they smoke with the thick darkness of a swarthy cloud, because, as soon as clouds form, before the eyes can see them, thin as they are, the winds carry and bring them together to the highest summits of a mountain; and then at last when they have gathered in a greater mass, being now dense they are able to make themselves visible and at the same time they are seen to rise up from the very top of the mountain into the ether: the very fact of the case and our sensations, when we climb high mountains, prove that the regions which stretch up on high are windy.

Again clothes hung up on the shore, when they drink in the clinging moisture, prove that nature takes up many bodies over the whole sea as well.

corpora naturam declarant litore vestis
suspensae, cum concipiunt umoris adhaesum.
quo magis ad nubis augendas multa videntur
posse quoque e salso consurgere momine ponti;
475 nam ratio consanguineast umoribus omnis.
Praeterea fluvii ex omnibus et simul ipsa
surgere de terra nebulas aestumque videmus,
quae vel ut halitus hinc ita sursum expressa feruntur
suffunduntque sua caelum caligine et altas
480 sufficiunt nubis paulatim conveniundo;
urget enim quoque signiferi super aetheris aestus
et quasi densendo subtexit caerula nimbis.
Fit quoque ut hunc veniant in caelum extrinsecus illa
corpora quae faciunt nubis nimbosque volantis;
485 innumerabilem enim numerum summamque profundi
esse infinitam docui, quantaque volarent
corpora mobilitate ostendi quamque repente
immemorabile per spatium transire solerent.
haut igitur mirumst, si parvo tempore saepe
490 tam magnis ventis tempestas atque tenebrae
coperiant maria ac terras inpensa superne,
undique quandoquidem per caulas aetheris omnis
et quasi per magni circum spiracula mundi
exitus introitusque elementis redditus extat.
495 Nunc age, quo pacto pluvius concreseat in altis
nubibus umor et in terras demissus ut imber
decidat, expediam. primum iam semina aquai
multa simul vincam consurgere nubibus ipsis
omnibus ex rebus pariterque ita crescere utrumque
500 et nubis et aquam, quae cumque in nubibus extat,
ut pariter nobis corpus cum sanguine crescit,
sudor item atque umor qui cumque est denique membris.
concipiunt etiam multum quoque saepe marinum
umorem, vel uti pendentia vellera lanae,
505 cum supera magnum mare venti nubila portant.
consimili ratione ex omnibus amnibus umor
tollitur in nubis. quo cum bene semina aquarum
multa modis multis convenere undique adaucta,
confertae nubes umorem mittere certant
510 dupliciter; nam vis venti contrudit et ipsa
copia nimborum turba maiore coacta
urget et e supero premit ac facit effluere imbris.
praeterea cum rarescunt quoque nubila ventis
aut dissolvuntur solis super icta calore,

515 mittunt umorem pluvium stillantque, quasi igni
cera super calido tabescens multa liquescat.

[471] This makes it still more plain that many bodies may likewise rise up out of the salt heaving sea to add to the bulk of clouds; for the two liquids are near akin in their nature.

Again we see mists and steam rise out of all rivers and at the same time from the earth as well; and they forced out like a breath from these parts are then carried upwards and overcast heaven with their darkness and make up clouds on high as they gradually come together; for the heat of starry ether at the same time presses down too on them and by condensing as it were weaves a web of clouds below the blue.

Sometimes there come here into heaven from without those bodies which form clouds and the flying storm-rack; for I have shown that their number passes numbering and that the sum of the deep is infinite; and I have proved with what velocity bodies fly and how in a moment of time they are wont to pass through space unspeakable.

It is not therefore strange that a tempest and darkness often in a short time cover over with such great mountains of clouds seas and lands, as they hang down upon them overhead, since on all sides through all the cavities of ether and as it were through the vents of the great world around the power of going out and coming in is accorded to the elements.

Now mark and I will explain in what way the rainy moisture is formed in the clouds above and then is sent down and falls to the earth in the shape of rain.

And first I will prove that many seeds of water rise up together with the clouds themselves out of all things and that both the clouds and the water which is in the clouds thus increase together; just as our body increases together with the blood, as well as the sweat and all the moisture which is in the frame.

The clouds likewise imbibe much sea-water as well, like hanging fleeces of wool, when the winds carry them over the great sea.

In like manner moisture is taken up out of all rivers into the clouds; and when the seeds of waters full many in number in many ways have met in them, augmented from all sides, then the close-packed clouds endeavor to discharge their moisture from two causes: the force of the wind drives them together, and likewise the very abundance of the rain-clouds, when a greater mass than usual has been brought together, pushes down, presses from above and forces the rain to stream out.

Again when the clouds are also rarefied by the winds, or are dispersed, being smitten at the same time by the heat of the sun, they discharge a rainy moisture and trickle down, just as wax over a hot fire melts away and turns fast into liquid.

sed vehemens imber fit, ubi vehementer utraque

nubila vi cumulata premuntur et impete venti.
at retinere diu pluviae longumque morari
520 consuerunt, ubi multa cientur semina aquarum
atque aliis aliae nubes nimbiue gigantes
insuper atque omni vulgo de parte feruntur,
terraque cum fumans umorem tota redhalat.
hic ubi sol radiis tempestatem inter opacam
525 adversa fulsit nimborum aspargine contra,
tum color in nigris existit nubibus arqui.
Cetera quae sursum crescunt sursumque creantur,
et quae concrescunt in nubibus, omnia, prorsum
omnia, nix venti grando gelidaeque pruinae
530 et vis magna geli, magnum duramen aquarum,
et mora quae fluvios passim refrenat aventis,
perfacilest tamen haec reperire animoque videre,
omnia quo pacto fiant quareve creentur,
cum bene cognoris elementis reddita quae sint.

[516] But a violent rain follows, when the clouds are violently pressed upon by both causes, by their own accumulated weight and by the impetuous assault of the wind.

And rains are wont to hold out and to last long, when many seeds of waters are stirred to action, and clouds upon clouds and rack upon rack welling forth from all quarters round about are borne along, and when the reeking earth steams moisture back again from its whole surface.

When in such a case the sun has shone with his rays amid the murky tempest right opposite the dripping rain-clouds, then the color of the rainbow shows itself among the black clouds.

As to the other things which grow by themselves and are formed by themselves, as well as the things which are formed within the clouds, all, without exception all, snow, winds, hail, and cold hoarfrosts and the great force of ice, the great congealing power of waters, and the stop which everywhere curbs running rivers, it is yet most easy to find out and apprehend in mind how all these things take place and in what way they are formed, when you have fully understood the properties assigned to elements.

Now mark and learn what the law of earthquakes is.

And first of all take for granted that the earth below us as well as above is filled in all parts with windy caverns and bears within its bosom many lakes and many chasms, cliffs and craggy rocks; and you must suppose that many rivers hidden beneath the crust of the earth roll on with violence waves and submerged stones; for the very nature of the case requires it to be throughout like to itself.

With such things then attached and placed below, the earth quakes above from the shock of great falling masses, when underneath time has undermined

vast caverns; whole mountains indeed fall in, and in an instant from the mighty shock tremblings spread themselves far and wide from that center.

And with good cause, since buildings beside a road tremble throughout when shaken by a wagon of not such very great weight; and they rock no less, where any sharp pebble on the road jolts up the iron tires of the wheels on both sides.

Sometimes too, when an enormous mass of soil through age rolls down from the land into great and extensive pools of water, the earth rocks and sways with the undulation of the water;

535 Nunc age, quae ratio terrai motibus extet
percipe. et in primis terram fac ut esse rearis
supter item ut supera ventosis undique plenam
speluncis multosque lacus multasque lucunas
in gremio gerere et rupes deruptaque saxa;
540 multaque sub tergo terrai flumina tecta
volvere vi fluctus summersos caeca putandumst;
undique enim similem esse sui res postulat ipsa.
his igitur rebus subiunctis suppositisque
terra superne tremit magnis concussa ruinis,
545 subter ubi ingentis speluncas subruit aetas;
quippe cadunt toti montes magnoque repente
concussu late disserpunt inde tremores.
et merito, quoniam plaustis concussa tremescunt
tectata viam propter non magno pondere tota,
550 nec minus exultant, si quidvis cumque viai
ferratos utrimque rotarum succutit orbes.
Fit quoque, ubi in magnas aquae vastasque lucunas
gleba vetustate e terra provolvitur ingens,
ut iactetur aquae fluctu quoque terra vacillans;
555 ut vas inter aquas non quit constare, nisi umor
destitit in dubio fluctu iactarier intus.
Praeterea ventus cum per loca subcava terrae
collectus parte ex una procumbit et urget
obnixus magnis speluncas viribus altas,
560 incumbit tellus quo venti prona premit vis.
tum supera terram quae sunt extracta domorum
ad caelumque magis quanto sunt edita quaeque,
inclinata minent in eandem prodita partem
protractaeque trabes inpendent ire paratae.
565 et metuunt magni naturam credere mundi
exitiale aliquod tempus clademque manere,
cum videant tantam terrarum incumbere molem!
quod nisi respirent venti, vis nulla refrenet

res neque ab exitio possit reprehendere euntis;
570 nunc quia respirant alternis inque gravescunt
et quasi collecti redeunt ceduntque repulsi,
saepius hanc ob rem minitatur terra ruinas
quam facit; inclinatur enim retroque recellit
et recipit prolapsa suas in pondere sedes.
575 hac igitur ratione vacillant omnia tecta,
summa magis mediis, media imis, ima perhilum.
Est haec eiusdem quoque magni causa tremoris.
ventus ubi atque animae subito vis maxima quaedam
aut extrinsecus aut ipsa tellure coorta
580 in loca se cava terrarum coniecit ibique
speluncas inter magnas fremit ante tumultu
versabundaQUE portatur, post incita cum vis
exagitata foras erumpitur et simul altam
diffundens terram magnum concinnat hiatus.
585 in Syria Sidone quod accidit et fuit Aegi
in Peloponneso, quas exitus hic animae
disturbat urbes et terrae motus obortus.
multaque praeterea ceciderunt moenia magnis
motibus in terris et multae per mare pessum
590 subsedere suis pariter cum civibus urbes.
quod nisi prorumpit, tamen impetus ipse animae
et fera vis venti per crebra foramina terrae
dispertitur ut horror et incutit inde tremorem;
frigus uti nostros penitus cum venit in artus,
595 concutit invitos cogens tremere atque movere.

[535] just as a vessel at times cannot rest, until the liquid within has ceased to sway about in unsteady undulations.

Again when the wind gathering itself together in the hollow places underground bears down on one point and pushing on presses with great violence the deep caverns, the earth leans over on the side to which the headlong violence of the wind presses.

Then all buildings which are above ground, and ever the more, the more they tower up towards heaven, lean over and bulge out yielding in the same direction, and the timbers wrenched from their supports hangover ready to give way.

And yet men shrink from believing that a time of destruction and ruin awaits the nature of the great world, though they see so great a mass of earth hang ready to fall!

And if the winds did not abate their blowing, no force could rein things in or hold them up on their road to destruction.

As it is, because by turns they do abate and then increase in violence, and

so to speak rally and return to the charge, and then are defeated and retire, for this reason the earth oftener threatens to fall than really falls: it leans over and then sways back again, and after tumbling forward recovers in equal poise its fixed position.

For this reason the whole house rocks, the top more than the middle, the middle than the bottom, the bottom in a very very slight degree.

The same great quaking likewise arises from this cause, when on a sudden the wind and some enormous force of air gathering either from without or within the earth have flung themselves into the hollows of the earth, and there chafe at first with much uproar among the great caverns and are carried on with a whirling motion, and when their force afterwards stirred and lashed into fury bursts abroad and at the same moment cleaves the deep earth and opens up a great yawning chasm.

This fell out in Syrian Sidon and took place at Aegium in the Peloponnese, two towns which an outbreak of wind of this sort and the ensuing earthquake threw down.

And many walled places besides fell down by great commotions on land and many towns sank down engulfed in the sea together with their burghers.

And if they do not break out, still the impetuous fury of the air and the fierce violence of the wind spread over the numerous passages of the earth like a shivering-fit and thereby cause a trembling; just as cold when it has pierced into our frames to the very marrow, sets them a-shivering in spite of themselves, forcing them to shake and move.

incipiti trepidant igitur terrore per urbis,
tectata superne timent, metuunt inferne cavernas
terrai ne dissoluatur natura repente,
neu distracta suum late dispandat hiatus
600 idque suis confusa velit complere ruinis.
proinde licet quamvis caelum terramque reantur
incorrupta fore aeternae mandata saluti:
et tamen inter dum praesens vis ipsa pericli
subdit et hunc stimulum quadam de parte timoris,
605 ne pedibus raptim tellus subtracta feratur
in barathrum rerumque sequatur prodita summa
funditus et fiat mundi confusa ruina.

* * *

Principio mare mirantur non reddere maius
naturam, quo sit tantus decursus aquarum,
610 omnia quo veniant ex omni flumina parte.
adde vagos imbris tempestatesque volantes,
omnia quae maria ac terras sparguntque rigantque;
adde suos fontis; tamen ad maris omnia summam

guttai vix instar erunt unius adaugmen;
615 quo minus est mirum mare non augescere magnum.
Praeterea magnam sol partem detrahit aestu.
quippe videmus enim vestis umore madentis
exsiccare suis radiis ardentibus solem;
at pelage multa et late substrata videmus.
620 proinde licet quamvis ex uno quoque loco sol
umoris parvam delibet ab aequore partem,
largiter in tanto spatio tamen auferet undis.
Tum porro venti quoque magnam tollere partem
umoris possunt verrentes aequora, ventis
625 una nocte vias quoniam persaepe videmus
siccari mollisque luti concreescere crustas.
Praeterea docui multum quoque tollere nubes
umorem magno conceptum ex aequore ponti
et passim toto terrarum spargere in orbi,
630 cum pluit in terris et venti nubila portant.
Postremo quoniam raro cum corpore tellus
est et coniunctast oras maris undique cingens,
debet, ut in mare de terris venit umor aquai,
in terras itidem manare ex aequore salso;
635 percolatur enim virus retroque remanat
materies umoris et ad caput amnibus omnis
confluit, inde super terras redit agmine dulci
qua via secta semel liquido pede detulit undas.

[597] Men are therefore disturbed by a twofold terror throughout their cities: they fear the roofs above their heads, they dread lest the nature of the earth in a moment break up her caverns underneath, and rent asunder display her own wide-gaping maw and wildly tumbled together seek to fill it up with her own ruins.

Let them then fancy as much as they please that heaven and earth shall be incorruptible and consigned to an everlasting exemption from decay; and yet sometimes the very present force of danger applies on some side or other this goad of fear among others, that the earth shall in an instant be withdrawn from under their feet and carried down into the pit, and that the sum of things shall utterly give way and follow after and a jumbled wreck of world ensue.

First of all they wonder that nature does not increase the bulk of the sea, when there is so great a flow of water into it, when all rivers from all quarters fall into it.

Add to these passing rains and flying storms, which bespatter every sea and moisten every land; add its own springs; yet all these compared with the sum of the sea will be like an addition of bulk hardly amounting to a single drop; it is therefore the less wonderful that the great sea does not increase.

Again the sun absorbs a great deal with his heat: we see him with his burning rays thoroughly dry clothes dripping with wet: but we know seas to be many in number and to stretch over a wide surface.

Therefore however small the portion of moisture which the sun draws off the surface from any one spot, it will yet in so vast an expanse take largely from its waters.

Then again the winds too may withdraw a great deal of moisture as they sweep over the surface, since we very often see the roads dried by the winds in a single night and the soft mud form into hard crusts.

Again I have shown that the clouds take off much moisture too imbibed from the great surface of the sea and scatter it about over the whole earth, when it rains on land and the winds carry on the clouds.

Lastly since the earth is of a porous body and is in contact with the sea, girding its shores all round, just as water comes from the earth into the sea, in the same way it must ooze into the land out of the salt sea; for the salt is strained off and the matter of liquid streams back again to the source and all flows together to the river-heads, and then passes anew over the lands in afresh current, where a channel once scooped out has carried down the waters with liquid foot.

Nunc ratio quae sit, per fauces montis ut Aetnae

640 expirent ignes inter dum turbine tanto,
expediam; neque enim mediocri clade coorta
flammae tempestas Siculum dominata per agros
finitimis ad se convertit gentibus ora,

fumida cum caeli scintillare omnia templa
645 cernentes pavida complebant pectora cura,
quid moliretur rerum natura novarum.

Hisce tibi in rebus latest alteque videndum
et longe cunctas in partis dispiciendum,
ut reminiscaris summam rerum esse profundam

650 et videas caelum summai totius unum
quam sit parvula pars et quam multesima constet
nec tota pars, homo terrai quota totius unus.

quod bene propositum si plane contueare
ac videas plane, mirari multa relinquas.

655 numquis enim nostrum miratur, siquis in artus
accepit calido febrim fervore coortam
aut alium quemvis morbi per membra dolorem?

opturgescit enim subito pes, arripit acer
saepe dolor dentes, oculos invadit in ipsos,

660 existit sacer ignis et urit corpore serpens
quam cumque arripuit partem repitque per artus,
ni mirum quia sunt multarum semina rerum

et satis haec tellus morbi caelumque mali fert,
unde queat vis immensi procreescere morbi.
665 sic igitur toti caelo terraeque putandumst
ex infinito satis omnia suppeditare,
unde repente queat tellus concussa moveri
perque mare ac terras rapidus percurrere turbo,
ignis abundare Aetnaeus, flammescere caelum;
670 id quoque enim fit et ardescunt caelestia templa
et tempestates pluviae graviore coortu
sunt, ubi forte ita se tetulerunt semina aquarum.
'at nimis est ingens incendi turbidus ardor.'
scilicet et fluviis qui visus maximus ei,
675 qui non ante aliquem maiorem vidit, et ingens
arbor homoque videtur et omnia de genere omni
maxima quae vidit quisque, haec ingentia fingit,
cum tamen omnia cum caelo terraeque marique
nil sint ad summam summai totius omnem.

[640] And now I will explain why it is that fires breathe forth at times through the gorges of mount Aetna with such hurricane-like fury; for with a destroying force of no ordinary kind the flame-storm gathered itself up and lording it over the lands of the Sicilians drew on itself the gaze of neighboring nations, when seeing all the quarters of heaven smoke and sparkle men were filled in heart with awe-struck apprehension, not knowing what strange change nature was travailing to work.

In these matters you must look far and deep and make a wide survey in all directions, in order to bear in mind that the sum of things is unfathomable and to perceive how very small, how inconceivably minute a fraction of the whole sum one heaven is, not so large a fraction of it as one man is of the whole earth.

If you should clearly comprehend, clearly see this point well put, you would cease to wonder at many things.

Does any one among us wonder if he has gotten into his frame a fever that has broken out with burning heat, or into his body the pains of any other disease? The foot suddenly swells, sharp pain often seizes the teeth, or else attacks the eyes; the holy fire breaks out and creeping over the body burns whatever part it has seized upon, and spreads over the frame, because sure enough there are seeds of many things, and this earth and heaven bring to us evil enough to allow of a measureless amount of disease springing up.

In this way then we must suppose that all things are supplied out of the infinite to the whole heaven and earth in quantity sufficient to allow the earth in a moment to be shaken and stirred, and a rapid hurricane to scour over sea and land, the fire of Aetna to overflow, the heaven to be in flames; for that too is seen and the heavenly quarters are on fire; and rain-storms gather in a

heavier mass, when the seeds of water have haply come together for such an end.

“Ay, but the stormy rage of the conflagration is too gigantic.”

Yes, and so any river you like is greatest to him who has never before seen any greater, and thus a tree and a man seem gigantic, and in the case of all things of all kinds the greatest a man has seen he fancies to be gigantic, though yet all things with heaven and earth and sea included are nothing to the whole sum of the universal sum.

680 Nunc tamen illa modis quibus iritata repente
flamma foras vastis Aetnae fornacibus efflet,
expediam. primum totius subcava montis
est natura fere silicum suffulta cavernis.

omnibus est porro in speluncis ventus et aëer.

685 ventus enim fit, ubi est agitando percitus aëer.

hic ubi percaluit cale fecitque omnia circum
saxa furens, qua contingit, terramque et ab ollis
excussit calidum flammis velocibus ignem,
tollit se ac rectis ita faucibus eicit alte.

690 fert itaque ardorem longe longeque favillam

differt et crassa volvit caligine fumum

extruditque simul mirando pondere saxa;

ne dubites quin haec animai turbida sit vis.

praeterea magna ex parti mare montis ad eius

695 radices frangit fluctus aestumque resolvit.

ex hoc usque mari speluncae montis ad altas

perveniant subter fauces. hac ire fatendumst

* * *

et penetrare mari penitus res cogit aperto

atque efflare foras ideoque extollere flammam

700 saxaque subiectare et arenae tollere nimbos.

in summo sunt vertice enim crateres, ut ipsi

nominitant, nos quod fauces perhibemus et ora.

Sunt aliquot quoque res quarum unam dicere causam

non satis est, verum pluris, unde una tamen sit;

705 corpus ut exanimum siquod procul ipse iacere

conspicias hominis, fit ut omnis dicere causas

conveniat leti, dicatur ut illius una;

nam neque eum ferro nec frigore vincere possis

interiisse neque a morbo neque forte veneno,

710 verum aliquid genere esse ex hoc quod contigit ei

scimus. item in multis hoc rebus dicere habemus.

Nilus in aestatem crescit campisque redundat

unicus in terris, Aegypti totius amnis.
is rigat Aegyptum medium per saepe calorem,
715 aut quia sunt aestate aquilones ostia contra,
anni tempore eo, qui etesiae esse feruntur,
et contra fluvium flantes remorantur et undas
cogentes sursus replent coguntque manere.

[680] And now at last I will explain in what ways yon flame roused to fury in a moment blazes forth from the huge furnaces of Aetna. And first the nature of the whole mountain is hollow underneath, underpropped throughout with caverns of basalt rocks.

Furthermore in all caves are wind and air; for wind is produced, when the air has been stirred and put in motion.

When this air has been thoroughly heated and raging about has imparted its heat to all the rocks round, wherever it comes in contact with them, and to the earth, and has struck out from them fire burning with swift flames, it rises up and then forces itself out on high straight through the gorges; and so carries its heat far and scatters far its ashes and rolls on smoke of a thick pitchy blackness and flings out at the same time stones of prodigious weight; leaving no doubt that this is the stormy force of air.

Again the sea to a great extent breaks its waves and sucks back its surf at the roots of that mountain.

Caverns reach from this sea as far as the deep gorges of the mountain below.

Through these you must admit [that air mixed up with water passes; and] the nature of the case compels [this air to enter in from that] open sea and pass right within and then go out in blasts and so lift up flame and throw out stones and raise clouds of sand; for on the summit are craters, as they name them in their own language; what we call gorges and mouths.

There are things too not a few for which it is not sufficient to assign one cause; you must give several, one of which at the same time is the real cause.

For instance should you see the lifeless body of a man lying at some distance, it would be natural to mention all the different causes of death, in order that the one real cause of that man's death be mentioned among them.

Thus you may be able to prove that he has not died by steel or cold or from disease or haply from poison; yet we know that it is something of this kind which has befallen him; and so in many other cases we may make the same remark.

The Nile rises every summer and overflows the plains, that one sole river throughout the whole land of Egypt.

It waters Egypt often in the middle of the hot season, either because in summer there are north winds opposite its mouths, which at that time of year go by the name of etesian winds.

nam dubio procul haec adverso flabra feruntur

720 flumine, quae gelidis ab stellis axis aguntur;
 ille ex aestifera parti venit amnis ab austro
 inter nigra virum percocto saecla colore
 exoriens penitus media ab regione diei.
 est quoque uti possit magnus congestus harenae
 725 fluctibus adversis oppilare ostia contra,
 cum mare permotum ventis ruit intus harenam;
 quo fit uti pacto liber minus exitus amnis
 et proclivis item fiat minus impetus undis.
 fit quoque uti pluviae forsán magis ad caput ei
 730 tempore eo fiant, quo etesia flabra aquilonum
 nubila coniciunt in eas tunc omnia partis.
 scilicet, ad mediam regionem eiecta diei
 cum convenerunt, ibi ad altos denique montis
 contrusae nubes coguntur vique premuntur.
 735 forsitan Aethiopum penitus de montibus altis
 crescat, ubi in campos albas descendere ningues
 tabificis subigit radiis sol omnia lustrans.
 Nunc age, Averno tibi quae sint loca cumque lacusque,
 expediam, quali natura praedita constent.
 740 principio, quod Averno vocantur nomine, id ab re
 inpositumst, quia sunt avibus contraria cunctis,
 e regione ea quod loca cum venere volantes,
 remigii oblatae pennarum vela remittunt
 praecipitesque cadunt molli cervice profusae
 745 in terram, si forte ita fert natura locorum,
 aut in aquam, si forte lacus substratus Averní.
 is locus est Cumas apud, acri sulphure montis
 oppleti calidis ubi fumant fontibus aucti.
 est et Athenaeis in moenibus, arcis in ipso
 750 vertice, Palladis ad templum Tritonidis almae,
 quo numquam pennis appellunt corpora raucae
 cornices, non cum fumant altaria donis;
 usque adeo fugitant non iras Palladis acris
 pervigili causa, Graium ut cecinere poëtae,
 755 sed natura loci opus efficit ipsa suapte.

[717] Blowing up the river they retard it and driving the waters backwards fill its channel full and force the river to stand still; for beyond a doubt these blasts which start from the icy constellations of the pole are carried right up the stream.

That river comes from the south out of the heat-fraught country, rising far up from the central region of day among races of men black in their sun-baked complexion.

It is quite possible too that the great accumulation of sand may bar up the mouths against the opposing waves, when the sea stirred up by the winds throws up the sand within the channel; whereby the outlet of the river is rendered less free and the current of the waters at the same time less rapid in its downward flow.

It may be also that the rains are more frequent at its source in that season, because the etesian blasts of the north winds drive all the clouds together into those parts at that time.

And, you are to know, when they have been driven on to the central region of day and have gathered together, then the clouds jammed close against the high mountains are massed together and violently compressed.

Perhaps too it gets its increase high up from the lofty mountains of the Ethiopians, when the all-surveying sun with his thawing rays constrains the white snows to descend into the plains.

Now mark, and I will make clear to you what kind of nature the several Avernian places and lakes possess.

First of all, as to the name Avernian by which they are called, it has been given to them from their real nature, because they are noxious to all birds; for when they have arrived in flight just opposite those spots, they forget to row with their wings, they drop their sails and fall with soft neck outstretched headlong to the earth, if so be that the nature of the ground admit of that, or into the water, if so be that a lake of Avernus spreads below.

There is such a spot at Cumae, where the mountains are charged with acrid sulfur, and smoke enriched with hot springs.

Such a spot there also is within the Athenian walls, on the very summit of the citadel, beside the temple of bountiful Tritonian Pallas; which croaking crows never come near on the wing; no not when the high altars smoke with offerings: so constantly they fly, not before the sharp wrath of Pallas for the sake of yon vigil kept, as the poets of the Greeks have sung, but the nature of the place suffices by its own proper power.

in Syria quoque fertur item locus esse videri,
quadripedes quoque quo simul ac vestigia primum
intulerint, graviter vis cogat concidere ipsa,
manibus ut si sint divis mactata repente.

760 omnia quae naturali ratione geruntur,
et quibus e fiant causis apparet origo;
ianua ne pote eis Orci regionibus esse
credatur, post hinc animas Acheruntis in oras
ducere forte deos manis inferne reamur,
765 naribus alipedes ut cervi saepe putantur
ducere de latebris serpentia saecula ferarum.
quod procul a vera quam sit ratione repulsum
perceipe; nam de re nunc ipsa dicere conor.

Principio hoc dico, quod dixi saepe quoque ante,
770 in terra cuiusque modi rerum esse figuras;
multa, cibo quae sunt, vitalia multaue, morbos
incutere et mortem quae possint adcelerare.
et magis esse aliis alias animantibus aptas
res ad vitae rationem ostendimus ante
775 propter dissimilem naturam dissimilisque
texturas inter sese primasque figuras.
multa meant inimica per auris, multa per ipsas
insinuant naris infesta atque aspera tactu,
nec sunt multa parum tactu vitanda neque autem
780 aspectu fugienda saporeque tristia quae sint.
Deinde videre licet quam multae sint homini res
acriter infesto sensu spurcaeque gravisque;
arboribus primum certis gravis umbra tributa
usque adeo, capitis faciant ut saepe dolores,
785 siquis eas subter iacuit prostratus in herbis.
est etiam magnis Heliconis montibus arbor
floris odore hominem taetro consueta necare.
scilicet haec ideo terris ex omnia surgunt,
multa modis multis multarum semina rerum
790 quod permixta gerit tellus discretaque tradit.
nocturnumque recens extinctum lumen ubi acri
nidore offendit nares, consopit ibidem,
concidere et spumas qui morbo mittere suevit.
castoreoque gravi mulier sopita recumbit,
795 et manibus nitidum teneris opus effluit ei,
tempore eo si odoratast quo menstrua solvit.

[756] In Syria too as well a spot, we are told, is found to exist of such a sort that as soon as ever even four-footed beasts have entered in, its mere natural power forces them to fall down heavily, just as if they were felled in a moment as sacrifices to the manes gods.

Now all these things go on by a natural law, and it is quite plain whence spring the causes from which they are produced; that the gate of Orcus be not haply believed to exist in such spots; and next we imagine that the manes gods from beneath do haply draw souls down from them to the borders of Acheron; as wing-footed stags are supposed often by their scent to draw out from their holes the savage serpent-tribes.

How widely opposed to true reason this is, now learn; for now I essay to tell of the real fact.

First of all I say, as I have often said before, that in the earth are elements of things of every kind: many, which serve for food, helpful to life; and many whose property it is to cause diseases and hasten death.

And we have shown before that one thing is more adapted to one, another thing to another living creature for the purposes of life, because of their natures and their textures and their primary elements being all unlike the one to the other.

Many which are noxious pass through the ears, many make their way too through the nostrils, dangerous and harsh when they come in contact; and not a few are to be shunned by the touch, and not a few to be avoided by the sight, and others are nauseous in taste.

Again you may see how many things are for man of a virulently noxious sensation and are nauseous and oppressive; to certain trees for instance has been given so very oppressive a shade that they often cause headaches when a man has lain down under them extended on the grass.

There is a tree too on the great hills of Helicon which has the property of killing a man by the noisome scent of its flower.

All these things you are to know rise up out of the earth, because it contains many seeds of many things in many ways mixed up together and gives them out in a state of separation.

Again when a newly extinguished night-light encounters the nostrils with its acrid stench, it sends to sleep then and there a man who from disease is subject to falling down and foaming at the mouth.

A woman is put to sleep by oppressive castor and falls back in her seat, and her gay work drops out of her soft hands, if she has smelt it at the time when she has her monthly discharges.

multaque praeterea languentia membra per artus
solvunt atque animam labefactant sedibus intus.
denique si calidis etiam cunctere lavabris
800 plenior et lueris, solio ferventis aquai
quam facile in medio fit uti des saepe ruinas!
carbonumque gravis vis atque odor insinuat
quam facile in cerebrum, nisi aqua praecepimus ante!
at cum membra domans percepit fervida febris,
805 tum fit odor vini plagae mactabilis instar.
nonne vides etiam terra quoque sulphur in ipsa
gignier et taetro concreescere odore bitumen,
denique ubi argenti venas aurique secuntur,
terrai penitus scrutantes abdita ferro,
810 qualis expiret Scaptensula subter odores?
quidve mali fit ut exalent aurata metalla!
quas hominum reddunt facies qualisque colores!
nonne vides audisve perire in tempore parvo
quam soleant et quam vitai copia desit,
815 quos opere in tali cohibet vis magna necessis?
hos igitur tellus omnis exaestuat aestus

expiratque foras in apertum promptaque caeli.
Sic et Averna loca alitibus summittere debent
mortiferam vim. de terra quae surgit in auras,
820 ut spatium caeli quadam de parte venenet;
quo simul ac primum pennis delata sit ales,
impediatur ibi caeco correpta veneno,
ut cadat e regione loci, qua derigit aestus.
quo cum conruit, hic eadem vis illius aestus
825 reliquias vitae membris ex omnibus aufert.
quippe etenim primo quasi quendam conciet aestum;
posterius fit uti. cum iam cecidere veneni
in fontis ipsos, ibi sit quoque vita vomenda,
propterea quod magna mali fit copia circum.
830 Fit quoque ut inter dum vis haec atque aestus Averni
aeëra, qui inter avis cumquest terramque locatus.
discutiat, prope uti locus hic linquatur inanis.
cuius ubi e regione loci venere volantis,
claudicat extemplo pinnarum nisus inanis
835 et conamen utrimque alarum proditur omne.
hic ubi nixari nequeunt insistereque alis,
scilicet in terram delabi pondere cogit
natura, et vacuum prope iam per inane iacentes
dispergunt animas per caulas corporis omnis.

* * *

[796] And many things besides relax through all the frame the fainting limbs
and shake the soul in its seats within.

Then too if you linger long in the hot baths when you are somewhat full
and do bathe, how liable you are to tumble down in a fit while seated in the
midst of the hot water!

Again, how readily do the oppressive power and fumes of charcoal make
their way into the brain, if we have not first taken water! But when burning
violently it has filled the chambers of a house, the fumes of the virulent
substance act on the nerves like a murderous blow.

See you not too that even within the earth sulfur is generated and asphalt
forms incrustations of a noisome stench? See you not, when they are
following up the veins of silver and gold and searching with the pick quite
into the bowels of the earth, what stench Scaptensula exhales from below?

Then what mischief do gold mines exhale! To what state do they reduce
men's faces and what a complexion they produce!

Know you not by sight or hearsay how they commonly perish in a short
time and how all vital power fails those whom the hard compulsion of
necessity confines in such an employment?

All such exhalations then the earth steams forth and breathes out into the

open air and light of heaven.

Thus too the Avernian spots must send up some power deadly to birds, which rises up from the earth into the air so as to poison a certain portion of the atmosphere; in such a way that a bird as soon as ever it is borne on its wings into it, is then attacked by the unseen poison and so palsied that it tumbles plump down on the spot where this exhalation has its course.

And when it falls into it, then the same power of that exhalation robs all its limbs of the remnants of life: first of all it causes a sort of dizziness; but afterwards, when the birds have tumbled into the very springs of the poison, then life too has to be vomited forth, because all round rises up large store of mischievous matter.

Sometimes too this power and exhalation of Avernus dispels whatever air lies between the birds and earth, so that almost a void is left there.

And when the birds have arrived in their flight just opposite this spot, at once the buoyant force of their pinions is crippled and rendered vain and all the sustaining efforts of their wings are lost on both sides.

So when they are unable to buoy themselves up and lean upon their wings, nature, you know, compels them by their weight to tumble down to earth, and lying stark through what is now almost a void they disperse their soul through all the openings of their body.

840 frigidior porro in puteis aestate fit umor,
arescit quia terra calore et semina si qua
forte vaporis habet proprie, dimittit in auras.
quo magis est igitur tellus effeta calore,
fit quoque frigidior qui in terrast abditus umor.
845 frigore cum premitur porro omnis terra coitque
et quasi concrescit, fit scilicet ut coeundo
exprimat in puteos si quem gerit ipsa calorem.
Esse apud Hammonis fanum fons luce diurna
frigidus et calidus nocturno tempore fertur.
850 hunc homines fontem nimis admirantur et acri
sole putant subter terras fervere partim,
nox ubi terribili terras caligine texit.
quod nimis a verast longe ratione remotum.
quippe ubi sol nudum contractans corpus aquai
855 non quierit calidum supera de reddere parte,
cum superum lumen tanto fervore fruatur,
qui queat hic supter tam crasso corpore terram
perquoquere umorem et calido focilare vapore?
praesertim cum vix possit per saepta domorum
860 insinuare suum radiis ardentibus aestum.
quae ratio est igitur? ni mirum terra magis quod
rara tenet circum fontem quam cetera tellus

multaque sunt ignis prope semina corpus aquai.
hoc ubi roriferis terram nox obruit undis,
865 extemplo penitus frigescit terra coitque.
hac ratione fit ut, tam quam compressa manu sit,
exprimat in fontem quae semina cumque habet ignis,
quae calidum faciunt laticis tactum atque vaporem.
inde ubi sol radiis terram dimovit obortus
870 et rare fecit calido miscente vapore,
rursus in antiquas redeunt primordia sedes
ignis et in terram cedit calor omnis aquai.
frigidus hanc ob rem fit fons in luce diurna.
praeterea solis radiis iactatur aquai
875 umor et in lucem tremulo rarescit ab aestu;
propterea fit uti quae semina cumque habet ignis
dimittat; quasi saepe gelum, quod continet in se,
mittit et exsolvit glaciem nodosque relaxat.

[840] Again during summer the water in wells becomes colder, because the earth is rarefied by heat and rapidly sends out into the air whatever seeds of heat it happens to have.

The more then the earth is drained of heat, the colder becomes the water which is hidden in the earth.

Again when all the earth is compressed by cold and contracts and so to say congeals, then, you are to know, while it contracts, it presses out into the wells whatever heat it contains itself.

At the fane of Hammon there is said to be a fountain which is cold in the daylight and hot in the night-time.

This fountain men marvel at exceedingly and suppose that it suddenly becomes hot by the influence of the fierce sun below the earth, when night has covered the earth with awful darkness.

But this is far far removed from true reason.

Why when the sun though in contact with the uncovered body of the water has not been able to make it hot on its upper side, though his light above possesses such great heat, how can he below the earth which is of so dense a body boil the water and glut it with heat? Above all, when he can scarcely with his burning rays force his heat through the walls of houses.

What then is the cause? This sure enough: the earth is more porous and warmer round the fountain than the rest of the earth, and there are many seeds of fire near the body of water.

For this reason when night has buried the earth in its dewy shadows, the earth at once becomes quite cold and contracts: in this way just as if it were squeezed by the hand it forces out into the fountain whatever seeds of fire it has; and these make the water hot to the touch and taste.

Next when the sun has risen and with his rays has loosened the earth and

has rarefied it as his heat waxes stronger, the first-beginnings of fire return back to their ancient seats and all the heat of the water withdraws into the earth: for this reason the fountain becomes cold in the daylight.

Again the liquid of water is played upon by the sun's rays and in the daytime is rarefied by his throbbing heat; and therefore it gives up whatever seeds of fire it has; just as it often parts with the frost which it holds in itself, and thaws the ice and loosens its bonds.

Frigidus est etiam fons, supra quem sita saepe
880 stuppa iacit flammam concepto protinus igni,
taedaeque consimili ratione accensa per undas
conlucet, quo cumque natans impellitur auris.
ni mirum quia sunt in aqua permulta vaporis
semina de terrae necessest funditus ipsa
885 ignis corpora per totum consurgere fontem
et simul exspirare foras exireque in auras,
non ita multa tamen, calidus queat ut fieri fons;
praeterea dispersa foras erumpere cogit
vis per aquam subito sursumque ea conciliari.
890 quod genus endo marist Aradi fons, dulcis aquai
qui scatit et salsas circum se dimovet undas;
et multis aliis praebet regionibus aequor
utilitatem opportunam sitientibus nautis,
quod dulcis inter salsas intervomit undas.
895 sic igitur per eum possunt erumpere fontem
et scatere illa foras; in stuppam semina quae cum
conveniunt aut in taedae corpore adhaerent,
ardescunt facile extemplo, quia multa quoque in se
semina habent ignis stuppae taedaeque tenentes.
900 nonne vides etiam, nocturna ad lumina linum
nuper ubi extinctum admoveas, accendier ante
quam tetigit flammam, taedamque pari ratione?
multaque praeterea prius ipso tacta vapore
eminus ardescunt quam comminus imbuat ignis.
905 hoc igitur fieri quoque in illo fonte putandumst.
Quod super est, agere incipiam quo foedere fiat
naturae, lapis hic ut ferrum ducere possit,
quem Magneta vocant patrio de nomine Grai,
Magnetum quia sit patriis in finibus ortus.
910 hunc homines lapidem mirantur; quippe catenam
saepe ex anellis reddit pendentibus ex se.
quinque etenim licet inter dum pluresque videre
ordine demisso levibus iactarier auris,
unus ubi ex uno dependet supter adhaerens

915 ex alioque alius lapidis vim vinclaque noscit;
usque adeo permanenter vis pervaleat eius.
Hoc genus in rebus firmandumst multa prius quam
ipsius rei rationem reddere possis,
et nimium longis ambagibus est adeundum;

[879] There is also a cold fountain of such a nature that tow, often when held over it, imbibes fire forthwith and emits flame; a pine torch in like manner is lighted and shines among the waters, in whatever direction it swims under the impulse of the winds.

Because sure enough there are in the water very many seeds of heat, and from the earth itself at the bottom must rise up bodies of fire throughout the whole fountain and at the same time pass abroad in exhalations and go forth into the air, not in such numbers however that the fountain can become hot, for these reasons a force compels those seeds to burst out through the water and disperse abroad and to unite when they have mounted up.

In the sea at Aradus is a fountain of this kind, which wells up with fresh water and keeps off the salt waters all round it; and in many other quarters the sea affords a seasonable help in need to thirsting sailors, vomiting forth fresh waters amid the salt.

In this way then those seeds may burst forth through that fountain and well out; and when they are met together in the tow or cohere in the body of the pine-torch, they at once readily take fire, because the tow and pinewood contain in them likewise many seeds of latent fire.

See you not too that, when you bring a newly extinguished wick near night-lamps it catches light before it has touched the flame; and the same with the pinewood? And many things beside catch fire at some distance touched merely by the heat, before the fire in actual contact infects them.

This therefore you must suppose to take place in that fountain as well.

Next in order I will proceed to discuss by what law of nature it comes to pass that iron can be attracted by that stone which the Greeks call the Magnet from the name of its native place, because it has its origin within the bounds of the country of the Magnesians.

This stone men wonder at; as it often produces a chain of rings hanging down from it.

Thus you may see sometimes five and more suspended in succession and tossing about in the light airs, one always hanging down from one and attached to its lower side, and each in turn one from the other experiencing the binding power of the stone: with such a continued current its force flies through all.

In things of this kind many points must be established before you can assign the true law of the thing in question, and it must be approached by a very circuitous road;

920 quo magis attentas auris animumque reposco.

Principio omnibus ab rebus, quas cumque videmus,
perpetuo fluere ac mitti spargique necessest
corpora quae feriant oculos visumque lacesant.
perpetuoque fluunt certis ab rebus odores;
925 frigus ut a fluviiis, calor a sole, aestus ab undis
aequoris, exesor moerorum, litora propter;
nec varii cessant sonitus manare per auras;
denique in os salsi venit umor saepe saporis,
cum mare versamur propter, dilutaque contra
930 cum tuimur misceri absinthia, tangit amaror.
usque adeo omnibus ab rebus res quaeque fluenter
fertur et in cunctas dimittitur undique partis
nec mora nec requies interdatur ulla fluendi,
perpetuo quoniam sentimus et omnia semper
935 cernere odorari licet et sentire sonare.
Nunc omnis repetam quam raro corpore sint res
commemorare; quod in primo quoque carmine claret.
quippe etenim, quamquam multas hoc pertinet ad res
noscere, cum primis hanc ad rem protinus ipsam,
940 qua de disserere adgredior, firmare necessest
nil esse in promptu nisi mixtum corpus inani.
principio fit ut in speluncis saxa superna
sudent umore et guttis manantibus stillent.
manat item nobis e toto corpore sudor,
945 crescit barba pilique per omnia membra, per artus.
diditur in venas cibus omnis, auget alitque
corporis extremas quoque partis unguiculosque.
frigus item transire per aes calidumque vaporem
sentimus, sentimus item transire per aurum
950 atque per argentum, cum pocula plena tenemus.
denique per dissaepa domorum saxea voces
pervolitant, permanat odor frigusque vaposque
ignis, qui ferri quoque vim penetrare sueëvit,
denique qua circum caeli lorica coeërcet,
955 morbida visque simul, cum extrinsecus insinuatur;
et tempestate in terra caeloque coorta
in caelum terrasque remotae iure facessunt;
quandoquidem nihil est nisi raro corpore nexum.
Huc accedit uti non omnia, quae iaciuntur
960 corpora cumque ab rebus, eodem praedita sensu
atque eodem pacto rebus sint omnibus apta.
principio terram sol excoquit et facit are,
at glaciem dissolvit et altis montibus altas
extructasque nives radiis tabescere cogit;

[920] wherefore all the more I call for an attentive ear and mind.

In the first place from all things whatsoever which we see there must incessantly stream and be discharged and scattered abroad such bodies as strike the eyes and provoke vision.

Smells too incessantly stream from certain things; as does cold from rivers, heat from the sun, spray from the waves of the sea that eats into walls near the shore.

Various sounds too cease not to stream through the air.

Then a moist salt flavor often comes into the mouth, when we are moving about beside the sea; and when we look on at the mixing of a decoction of wormwood, its bitterness affects us.

In such a constant stream from all things the several qualities of things are carried and are transmitted in all directions round, and no delay, no respite in the flow is ever granted, since we constantly have feeling, and may at anytime see, smell and hear the sound of anything.

And now I will state once again how rare a body all things have: a question made clear in the first part of my poem also: although the knowledge of this is of importance in regard to many things, above all in regard to this very question which I am coming to discuss, at the very outset it is necessary to establish that nothing comes under sense save body mixed with void.

For instance in caves rocks overhead sweat with moisture and trickle down in oozing drops.

Sweat too oozes out from our whole body; the beard grows, and hairs over all our limbs and frame.

Food is distributed through all the veins, gives increase and nourishment to the very extremities and nails.

We feel too cold and heat pass through brass, we feel them pass through gold and silver, when we hold full cups.

Again voices fly through the stone partitions of houses; smell passes through and cold, and the heat of fire which is wont ay to pierce even the strength of iron, where the Gaulish cuirass girds the body round.

And when a storm has gathered in earth and heaven, and when along with it the influence of disease makes its way in from without, they both withdraw respectively to heaven and earth and there work their wills, since there is nothing at all that is not of a rare texture of, body.

Furthermore all bodies whatever which are discharged from things are not qualified to excite the same sensations nor are adapted for all things alike.

The sun for instance bakes and dries up the earth, but thaws ice, and forces the snows piled up high on the high hills to melt away beneath his rays;

965 denique cera lique fit in eius posta vapore.

ignis item liquidum facit aes aurumque resolvit,

at coria et carnem trahit et conducit in unum.

umor aquae porro ferrum condurat ab igni,

at coria et carnem mollit durata calore.
 970 barbigeras oleaster eo iuvat usque capellas,
 effluat ambrosias quasi vero et nectare tinctus;
 qua nihil est homini quod amarius fronde acida extet.
 denique amaracinum fugitat sus et timet omne
 unguentum; nam saetigeris subus acre venenumst;
 975 quod nos inter dum tam quam recreare videtur.
 at contra nobis caenum taeterrima cum sit
 spurcities, eadem subus haec iucunda videtur,
 insatiabiliter toti ut volvantur ibidem.
 Hoc etiam super est, ipsa quam dicere de re
 980 adgredior, quod dicendum prius esse videtur.
 multa foramina cum variis sint reddita rebus,
 dissimili inter se natura praedita debent
 esse et habere suam naturam quaeque viasque.
 quippe etenim varii sensus animantibus insunt,
 985 quorum quisque suam proprie rem percipit in se;
 nam penetrare alio sonitus alioque saporem
 cernimus e sucis, alio nidoris odores.
 scilicet id fieri cogit natura viarum
 multimodis varians, ut paulo ostendimus ante.
 990 praeterea manare aliud per saxa videtur,
 atque aliud lignis, aliud transire per aurum,
 argentoque foras aliud vitroque meare;
 nam fluere hac species, illac calor ire videtur,
 atque aliis aliud citius transmittere eadem.
 995 scilicet id fieri cogit natura viarum
 multimodis varians, ut paulo ostendimus ante,
 propter dissimilem naturam textaque rerum.
 Qua propter, bene ubi haec confirmata atque locata
 omnia constiterint nobis praeposta parata,
 1000 quod super est, facile hinc ratio reddetur et omnis
 causa pate fiet, quae ferri pelliciat vim.
 Principio fluere e lapide hoc permulta necessest
 semina sive aestum, qui discutit aëra plagis,
 inter qui lapidem ferrumque est cumque locatus.
 1005 hoc ubi inanitur spatium multusque vace fit
 in medio locus, extemplo primordia ferri
 in vacuum prolapsa cadunt coniuncta, fit utque
 anulus ipse sequatur eatque ita corpore toto.

[964] wax again turns to liquid when placed within reach of his heat,

Fire also melts brass and fuses gold, but shrivels up and draws together hides and flesh.

The liquid of water after fire hardens steel, but softens hides and flesh hardened by heat.

The wild olive delights the bearded she-goats as much as if the flavor it yielded were of ambrosia and steeped in nectar; but nothing that puts forth leaf is more bitter to man than this food.

Again a swine eschews marjoram-oil and dreads all perfumes; for they are rank poison to bristly swine, though they are found at times to give us as it were fresh life.

But on the other hand though mire is to us the nastiest filth, it is found to be so welcome to swine that they wallow in it all over with a craving not to be satisfied.

There is still one point left which it seems proper to mention, before I come to speak of the matter in hand.

Since many pores are assigned to various things, they must possess natures differing the one from the other and must have each its own nature, its own direction: thus there are in living creatures various senses, each of which takes into it in its own peculiar way its own special object; for we see that sounds pass into one thing, taste from different flavors into another thing, smells into another.

Again one thing is seen to stream through stones and another thing to pass through woods, another through gold, and another still to go out through silver and brass; for form is seen to stream through this passage, heat through that, and one thing is seen to pass through by the same way more quickly than other things.

The nature of the passages, you are to know, compels it so to be, varying in manifold wise, as we have shown a little above, owing to the unlike nature and textures of things.

Therefore now that these points have all been established and arranged for us as premisses ready to our hand, for what remains, the law will easily be explained out of them, and the whole cause be laid open which attracts the strength of iron.

First of all there must stream from this stone very many seeds or a current if you will which dispels with blows all the air which lies between the stone and iron.

When this space is emptied and much room left void between, forthwith the first-beginnings of iron fall headlong forward into the void in one mass, and in consequence the ring itself follows and then goes on with its whole body.

nec res ulla magis primoribus ex elementis

¹⁰¹⁰ indupedita suis arte conexa cohaeret

quam validi ferri natura et frigidus horror.

quo minus est mirum, quod dicitur esse alienum,

corpora si nequeunt e ferro plura coorta

in vacuum ferri, quin anulus ipse sequatur;
 1015 quod facit et sequitur, donec pervenit ad ipsum
 iam lapidem caecisque in eo compagibus haesit.
 hoc fit idem cunctas in partis; unde vace fit
 cumque locus, sive e transverso sive superne,
 corpora continuo in vacuum vicina feruntur;
 1020 quippe agitantur enim plagis aliunde nec ipsa
 sponte sua sursum possunt consurgere in auras.
 huc accedit item, quare queat id magis esse,
 haec quoque res adiumento motuque iuvatur,
 quod, simul a fronte est anelli rarior aeër
 1025 factus inanitusque locus magis ac vacuatus,
 continuo fit uti qui post est cumque locatus
 aeër a tergo quasi provehat atque propellat.
 semper enim circum positus res verberat aeër;
 sed tali fit uti propellat tempore ferrum,
 1030 parte quod ex una spatium vacat et capit in se.
 hic, tibi quem memoro, per crebra foramina ferri
 parvas ad partis subtiliter insinuatus
 trudit et inpellit, quasi navem velaque ventus.
 denique res omnes debent in corpore habere
 1035 aeëra, quandoquidem raro sunt corpore et aeër
 omnibus est rebus circum datus adpositusque.
 hic igitur, penitus qui in ferrost abditus aeër,
 sollicito motu semper iactatur eoque
 verberat anellum dubio procul et ciet intus,
 1040 scilicet illo eodem fertur, quo praecipitavit
 iam semel et partem in vacuum conamina sumpsit.
 Fit quoque ut a lapide hoc ferri natura recedat
 inter dum, fugere atque sequi consueta vicissim.
 exultare etiam Samothracia ferrea vidi
 1045 et ramenta simul ferri furere intus ahenis
 in scaphiis, lapis hic Magnes cum subditus esset;
 usque adeo fugere a saxo gestire videtur.
 aere interposito discordia tanta creatur
 propterea quia ni mirum prius aestus ubi aeris
 1050 praecepit ferrique vias possedit apertas,
 posterior lapidis venit aestus et omnia plena
 invenit in ferro neque habet qua tranet ut ante;

[1009] And nothing has its primal elements more intricately entangled or
 coheres in closer connection than the nature of stubborn iron and its coldness
 that makes you shiver.

Therefore what I say is the less strange, that from among such elements as

these bodies cannot gather in large numbers out of the iron and be carried into the void without the whole ring following.

This it does do, and follows on until it has quite reached the stone and fastened on it with unseen bonds of connection.

The same thing takes place in all directions: on whatever side a void is formed, whether athwart or from above the first bodies next it are at once carried on into the void; for they are set in motion by blows from another source and cannot by their own free act rise up into the air.

Moreover (to render it more feasible, this thing also is helped on by external aid and motion) as soon as the air in front of the ring has been made rarer and the space more empty and void, it follows at once that all the air which lies behind, carries and pushes it on as it were at its back.

For the air which lies around them always beats on things; but at such a time as this it is able to push on the iron, because on one side a space is void and receives the iron into it.

This air of which I am speaking to you makes its way with much subtlety through the frequent pores of the iron to its minute parts and then thrusts and pushes it on, as the wind a ship and its sails.

Again all things must have air in their body, since they are of a rare body and air surrounds and is in contact with all things.

This air therefore which is in the inmost recesses of the iron, is ever stirred in restless motion and therefore beats the ring without a doubt and stirs it within, you know: the ring is carried in the direction in which it has once plunged forward, and into the void part towards which it has made its start.

Sometimes too it happens that the nature of iron is repelled from this stone, being in the habit of flying from and following it in turns.

I have seen Samothracian iron rings even jump up, and at the same time filings of iron rave within brass basins, when this Magnet stone had been placed under: such a strong desire the iron seems to have to fly from the stone.

So great a disturbance is raised by the interposition of the brass, because sure enough when the current of the brass has first seized on and taken possession of the open passages of the iron, the current of the stone comes after and finds all things full in the iron and has no opening to swim through as before.

cogitur offensare igitur pulsareque fluctu
ferrea texta suo; quo pacto respuit ab se
1055 atque per aes agitat, sine eo quod saepe resorbet.
Illud in his rebus mirari mitte, quod aestus
non valet e lapide hoc alias impellere item res.
pondere enim fretae partim stant, quod genus aurum;
at partim raro quia sunt cum corpore, ut aestus
1060 pervolet intactus, nequeunt inpellier usquam,
lignea materies in quo genere esse videtur.

interutrasque igitur ferri natura locata
aeris ubi accepit quaedam corpuscula, tum fit,
inpellant ut eo Magnesia flumine saxa.

1065 nec tamen haec ita sunt aliarum rerum aliena,
ut mihi multa parum genere ex hoc suppeditentur,
quae memorare queam inter se singlariter apta.
saxa vides primum sola colescere calce.

glutine materies taurino iungitur una,
1070 ut vitio venae tabularum saepius hiscant
quam laxare queant compages taurea vincla.
vitigeni latices aquai fontibus audent
misceri, cum pix nequeat gravis et leve olivom.
purpureusque colos conchyli iungitur uno

1075 corpore cum lanae, dirimi qui non queat usquam,
non si Neptuni fluctu renovare operam des,
non mare si totum velit eluere omnibus undis.
denique res auro non aurum copulat una,
aerique aes plumbo fit uti iungatur ab albo?

1080 cetera iam quam multa licet reperire! quid ergo?
nec tibi tam longis opus est ambagibus usquam
nec me tam multam hic operam consumere par est,
sed breviter paucis praestat comprehendere multa.
quorum ita texturae ceciderunt mutua contra,
1085 ut cava convenient plenis haec illius illa
huiusque inter se, iunctura haec optima constat.
est etiam, quasi ut anellis hamisque plicata
inter se quaedam possint coplata teneri;
quod magis in lapide hoc fieri ferroque videtur.

[1053] It is forced therefore to dash against and beat with its wave the iron texture; by which means it repels from it and sets in motion through the brass that which without the brass it often draws to itself.

And forbear herein to wonder that the current from this stone is not able to set in motion other things as well as iron: some of these stand still by the power of their own weight; for instance gold; and others, because they are of so rare a body that the current flies through them uninterrupted, cannot in any case be set in motion; to which class wood is found to belong.

When therefore the nature of iron lying between the two has received into it certain first bodies of brass, then do the Magnet stones set it in motion with their stream.

And yet these cases are not so much at variance with other things, that I have only a scanty store of similar instances to relate of things mutually fitted one for the other and for nothing else: stones for instance you see are cemented by mortar alone; wood is united with wood so firmly by bulls' glue

only, that the veins of boards often gape in cracks before the binding power of the glue can be brought to loosen its hold.

Vine-born juices venture to mix with streams of water, though heavy pitch and light oil cannot.

Again the purple dye of the shellfish so unites with the body of wool alone, that it cannot in any case be severed, not were you to take pains to undo what is done with Neptune's wave, not if the whole sea were willed to wash it out with all its waters.

Then too is there not one thing only that fastens gold to gold, and is not brass soldered to brass by tin? And how many other cases of the kind might one find! What then? You have no need whatever of such long circuitous roads, nor is it worth my while to spend so much pains on this, but it is better briefly to comprise many things in few words: things whose textures have such a mutual correspondence, that cavities fit solids, the cavities of the first the solids of the second, the cavities of the second the solids of the first, form the closest union.

Again some things may be fastened together and held in union with hooks and eyes as it were; and this seems rather to be the case with this stone and iron.

1090 Nunc ratio quae sit morbis aut unde repente
mortiferam possit cladem conflare coorta
morbida vis hominum generi pecudumque catervis,
expediam, primum multarum semina rerum
esse supra docui quae sint vitalia nobis,
1095 et contra quae sint morbo mortique necessest
multa volare; ea cum casu sunt forte coorta
et perturbarunt caelum, fit morbidus aeër.
atque ea vis omnis morborum pestilitasque
aut extrinsecus ut nubes nebulaeque superne
1100 per caelum veniunt aut ipsa saepe coorta
de terra surgunt, ubi putorem umida nactast
intempestivis pluviisque et solibus icta.
nonne vides etiam caeli novitate et aquarum
temptari procul a patria qui cumque domoque
1105 adveniunt ideo quia longe discrepant res?
nam quid Brittannis caelum differre putamus,
et quod in Aegypto est, qua mundi claudicat axis,
quidve quod in Ponto est differre et Gadibus atque
usque ad nigra virum percocto saecula colore?
1110 quae cum quattuor inter se diversa videmus
quattuor a ventis et caeli partibus esse,
tum color et facies hominum distare videntur
largiter et morbi generatim saecula tenere.

est elephas morbus qui propter flumina Nili
1115 gignitur Aegypto in media neque praeterea usquam.
Atthide temptantur gressus oculique in Achaeis
finibus. inde aliis alius locus est inimicus
partibus ac membris; varius concinnat id aeër.
proinde ubi se caelum, quod nobis forte alienum,
1120 commovet atque aeër inimicus serpere coepit,
ut nebula ac nubes paulatim repit et omne
qua graditur conturbat et immutare coactat,
fit quoque ut, in nostrum cum venit denique caelum,
corruptat reddatque sui simile atque alienum.
1125 haec igitur subito clades nova pestilitasque
aut in aquas cadit aut fruges persidit in ipsas
aut alios hominum pastus pecudumque cibatus,
aut etiam suspensa manet vis aeëre in ipso
et, cum spirantes mixtas hinc ducimus auras,
1130 illa quoque in corpus pariter sorbere necessest.
consimili ratione venit bubus quoque saepe

[1090] And now I will explain what the law of diseases is and from what causes the force of disease may suddenly gather itself up and bring death-dealing destruction on the race of man and the troops of brute beasts.

And first I have shown above that there are seeds of many things helpful to our life; and on the other hand many must fly about conducing to disease and death.

When these by chance have happened to gather together and have disordered the atmosphere, the air becomes distempered.

And all that force of disease and that pestilence come either from without down through the atmosphere in the shape of clouds and mists, or else do gather themselves up and rise out of the earth, when soaked with wet it has contracted a taint, being beaten upon by unseasonable rains and suns.

See you not too that all who come to a place far away from country and home are affected by the strangeness of climate and water, because there are wide differences in such things?

For what a difference may we suppose between the climate of the Briton and that of Egypt where the pole of heaven slants askew, and again between that in Pontus and that of Gades and so on to the races of men black with sun-baked complexion?

Now as we see these four climates under the four opposite winds and quarters of heaven all differing from each other, so also the complexions and faces of the men are seen to differ widely and diseases varying in kind are found to seize upon the different races.

There is the elephant disease which is generated beside the streams of Nile in the midst of Egypt and nowhere else.

In Attica the feet are attacked and the eyes in Achaean lands.

And so different places are hurtful to different parts and members: the variations of air occasion that.

Therefore when an atmosphere which happens to put itself in motion unsuited to us and a hurtful air beg into advance, they creep slowly on in the shape of mist and cloud and disorder everything in their line of advance and compel all to change; and when they have at length reached our atmosphere, they corrupt it too and make it like to themselves and unsuited to us.

This new destroying power and pestilence therefore all at once either fall upon the waters or else sink deep into the corn-crops or other food of man and provender of beast; or else their force remains suspended within the atmosphere, and when we inhale from it mixed airs, we must absorb at the same time into our body those things as well.

In like manner pestilence often falls on kine also and a distemper too on the silly sheep.

pestilitas et iam pigris balantibus aegror.

nec refert utrum nos in loca deveniamus

nobis adversa et caeli mutemus amictum,

1135 an caelum nobis ultro natura corruptum

deferat aut aliquid quo non consuevimus uti,

quod nos adventu possit temptare recenti.

Haec ratio quondam morborum et mortifer aestus

finibus in Cecropis funestos reddidit agros

1140 vastavitque vias, exhaustit civibus urbem.

nam penitus veniens Aegypti finibus ortus,

aeëra permensus multum camposque natantis,

incubuit tandem populo Pandionis omni.

inde catervatim morbo mortique dabantur.

1145 principio caput incensum fervore gerebant

et duplicis oculos suffusa luce rubentes.

sudabant etiam fauces intrinsecus atrae

sanguine et ulceribus vocis via saepta coibat

atque animi interpret manabat lingua cruore

1150 debilitata malis, motu gravis, aspera tactu.

inde ubi per fauces pectus complerat et ipsum

morbida vis in cor maestum confluxerat aegris,

omnia tum vero vitae claustra lababant.

spiritus ore foras taetrum volvebat odorem,

1155 rancida quo perolent proiecta cadavera ritu.

atque animi prorsum tum vires totius, omne

languibat corpus leti iam limine in ipso.

intolerabilibusque malis erat anxius angor

adsidue comes et gemitu commixta querella,

1160 singultusque frequens noctem per saepe diemque
corripere adsidue nervos et membra coactans
dissoluebat eos, defessos ante, fatigans.
nec nimio cuiquam posses ardore tueri
corporis in summo summam ferverescere partem,
1165 sed potius tepidum manibus proponere tactum
et simul ulceribus quasi inustis omne rubere
corpus, ut est per membra sacer dum diditur ignis.
intima pars hominum vero flagrabat ad ossa,
flagrabat stomacho flamma ut fornacibus intus.
1170 nil adeo posses cuiquam leve tenveque membris
vertere in utilitatem, at ventum et frigora semper.
in fluvios partim gelidos ardentia morbo
membra dabant nudum iacentes corpus in undas.

[1132] And it makes no difference whether we travel to places unfavorable to us and change the atmosphere which wraps us round, or whether nature without our choice brings to us a tainted atmosphere or something to the use of which we have not been accustomed, and which is able to attack us on its first arrival.

Such a form of disease and a death-fraught miasm erst within the borders of Cecrops defiled the whole land with dead, and dispeopled the streets, drained the town of burghers.

Rising first and starting from the inmost corners of Egypt, after traversing much air and many floating fields, the plague brooded at last over the whole people of Pandion; and then they were handed over in troops to disease and death.

First of all they would have the head seized with burning heat and both eyes blood-shot with aglare diffused over; the livid throat within would exude blood and the passage of the voice be clogged and choked with ulcers, and the mind's interpreter the tongue drip with gore, quite enfeebled with sufferings, heavy in movement, rough to touch.

Next when the force of disease passing down the throat had filled the breast and had streamed together even into the sad heart of the sufferers, then would all the barriers of life give way.

The breath would pour out at the mouth a noisome stench, even as the stench of rotting carcasses thrown out unburied.

And then the powers of the entire mind, the whole body would sink utterly, now on the very threshold of death.

And a bitter despondency was the constant attendant on insufferable ills and complaining mingled with moaning.

An ever-recurring hiccup often the night and day through, forcing on continual spasms in sinews and limbs, would break men quite, for wearying those forspent before.

And yet in none could you perceive the skin on the surface of the body burn with any great heat, but the body would rather offer to the hand a lukewarm sensation and at the same time be red all over with ulcers burnt into it so to speak, like unto the holy fire as it spreads over the frame.

The inward parts of the men however would burn to the very bones, a flame would bum within the stomach as within furnaces.

Nothing was light and thin enough to apply to the relief of the body of any one; ever wind and cold alone.

Many would plunge their limbs burning with disease into the cool rivers, throwing their body naked into the water.

multi praecipites nymphis putealibus alte
1175 inciderunt ipso venientes ore patente:
insedabiliter sitis arida corpora mersans
aequabat multum parvis umoribus imbrem.
nec requies erat ulla mali: defessa iacebant
corpora. mussabat tacito medicina timore,
1180 quippe patentia cum totiens ardentia morbis
lumina versarent oculorum expertia somno.
multaque praeterea mortis tum signa dabantur:
perturbata animi mens in maerore metuque,
triste supercilium, furiosus voltus et acer,
1185 sollicitae porro plенаeque sonoribus aures,
creber spiritus aut ingens raroque coortus,
sudorisque madens per collum splendidusumor,
tenvia sputa minuta, croci contacta colore
salsaque per fauces rauca vix edita tussi.
1190 in manibus vero nervi trahere et tremere artus
a pedibusque minutatim succedere frigus
non dubitabat. item ad supremum denique tempus
conpressae nares, nasi primoris acumen
tenve, cavati oculi, cava tempora, frigida pellis
1195 duraque in ore, iacens rictu, frons tenta manebat.
nec nimio rigida post artus morte iacebant.
octavoque fere candenti lumine solis
aut etiam nona reddebant lampade vitam.
quorum siquis, ut est, vitarat funera leti,
1200 ulceribus taetris et nigra proluvie alvi
posterius tamen hunc tabes letumque manebat,
aut etiam multus capitis cum saepe dolore
corruptus sanguis expletis naribus ibat.
huc hominis totae vires corpusque fluebat.
1205 profluvium porro qui taetri sanguinis acre
exierat, tamen in nervos huic morbus et artus

ibat et in partis genitalis corporis ipsas.
et graviter partim metuentes limina leti
vivebant ferro privati parte virili,
1210 et manibus sine non nulli pedibusque manebant
in vita tamen et perdebant lumina partim.
usque adeo mortis metus iis incesserat acer.
atque etiam quosdam cepere obliviam rerum
cunctarum, neque se possent cognoscere ut ipsi.
1215 multaque humi cum inhumata iacerent corpora supra
corporibus, tamen alituum genus atque ferarum
aut procul absiliebat, ut acrem exiret odorem,
aut, ubi gustarat, languebat morte propinqua.

[1174] Many tumbled headforemost deep down into the wells, meeting the water straight with mouth wide agape.

Parching thirst with a craving not to be appeased, drenching their bodies, would make an abundant draught no better than the smallest drop.

No respite was there of ill: their bodies would lie quite spent.

The healing art would mutter low in voiceless fear, as again and again they rolled about their eye-balls wide open, burning with disease, never visited by sleep.

And many symptoms of death besides would then be given, the mind disordered in sorrow and fear, the clouded brow, the fierce delirious expression, the ears too troubled and filled with ringings, the breathing quick or else strangely loud and slow-recurring, and the sweat glistening wet over the neck, the spittle in thin small flakes, tinged with a saffron-color, salt, scarce forced up the rough throat by coughing.

The tendons of the hands ceased not to contract, the limbs to shiver, a coldness to mount with slow sure pace from the feet upward.

Then at their very last moments they had nostrils pinched, the tip of the nose sharp, eyes deep-sunk, temples hollow, the skin cold and hard, on the grim mouth a grin, the brow tense and swollen; and not long after their limbs would be stretched stiff in death: about the eighth day of bright sunlight or else on the ninth return of his lamp they would yield up life.

And if any of them at that time had shunned the doom of death, yet in after time consumption and death would await him from noisome ulcers and the black discharge of the bowels, or else a quantity of purulent blood accompanied by headache would often pass out by the gorged nostrils: into these the whole strength and substance of the man would stream.

Then too if any one had escaped the acrid discharge of noisome blood, the disease would yet pass into his sinews and joints and onward even into the sexual organs of the body; and some from excessive dread of the gates of death would live bereaved of these parts by the knife; and some though without hands and feet would continue in life, and some would lose their eyes:

with such force had the fear of death come upon them.

And some were seized with such utter loss of memory that they did not know themselves.

And though bodies lay in heaps above bodies unburied on the ground, yet would the race of birds and beasts either scour faraway, to escape the acrid stench, or where anyone had tasted, it drooped in near-following death.

nec tamen omnino temere illis solibus ulla

1220 comparebat avis, nec tristia saecla ferarum

exibant silvis. languebant pleraque morbo

et moriebantur. cum primis fida canum vis

strata viis animam ponebat in omnibus aegre;

extorquebat enim vitam vis morbida membris.

1225 incommutata rapi certabant funera vasta

nec ratio remedii communis certa dabatur;

nam quod ali dederat vitalis aëris auras

volvere in ore licere et caeli templa tueri,

hoc aliis erat exitio letumque parabat.

1230 Illud in his rebus miserandum magnopere unum

aerumnabile erat, quod ubi se quisque videbat

implicitum morbo, morti damnatus ut esset,

deficiens animo maestus cum corde iacebat,

funera respectans animam amittebat ibidem.

1235 quippe etenim nullo cessabant tempore apisci

ex aliis alios avidi contagia morbi,

lanigeras tam quam pecudes et bucera saecla,

idque vel in primis cumulabat funere funus

nam qui cumque suos fugitabant visere ad aegros,

1240 vitae nimium cupidos mortisque timentis

poenibat paulo post turpi morte malaque,

desertos, opis expertis, incuria mactans.

qui fuerant autem praesto, contagibus ibant

atque labore, pudor quem tum cogebat obire

1245 blandaque lassorum vox mixta voce querellae.

optimus hoc leti genus ergo quisque subibat.

Praeterea iam pastor et armentarius omnis

et robustus item curvi moderator aratri

languebat, penitusque casa contrusa iacebant

1250 corpora paupertate et morbo dedita morti.

exanimis pueris super exanimata parentum

corpora non numquam posses retroque videre

matribus et patribus natos super edere vitam.

nec minimam partem ex agris maeror is in urbem

1255 confluit, languens quem contulit agricolarum

copia conveniens ex omni morbida parte.
omnia conplebant loca tectaque quo magis aestu,
confertos ita acervatim mors accumulabat.
multa siti prostrata viam per proque voluta
1260 corpora silanos ad aquarum strata iacebant
interclusa anima nimia ab dulcedine aquarum,

[1219] Though hardly at all in those days would any bird appear, or the sullen breeds of wild beasts quit the forests.

Many would droop with disease and die: above all faithful dogs would lie stretched in all the streets and yield up breath with a struggle, for the power of disease would wrench life from their frame.

Funerals lonely, unattended, would be hurried on with emulous haste.

And no sure and general method of cure was found; for that which had given to one man the power to inhale the vital air and to gaze on the quarters of heaven, would be destruction to others and would bring on death.

But in such times this was what was deplorable and above all eminently heart-rending: when a man saw himself enmeshed by the disease, as though he were doomed to death, losing all spirit he would lie with sorrow-stricken heart, and with his, thoughts turned on death would surrender his life then and there.

Ay for at no time did they cease to catch from one another the infection of the devouring plague, like to woolly flocks and horned herds.

And this all heaped death on death: whenever any refused to attend their own sick, killing neglect soon after would punish them for their too great love of life and fear of death by a foul and evil death, abandoned in turn, forlorn of help.

But they who had stayed which shame would then compel them to undergo and the sick man's accents of affection mingled with those of complaining: this kind of death the most virtuous would meet. * * and different bodies on by them, would perish by infection and the labor different piles, struggling as they did to bury the multitude of their dead: then spent with tears and grief they would go home; and in great part they would take to their bed from sorrow.

And none could be found whom at so fearful a time neither disease nor death nor mourning assailed.

Then too every shepherd and herdsman, ay and sturdy guider of the bent plow sickened; and their bodies would lie huddled together in the corners of a hut, delivered over to death by poverty and disease.

Sometimes you might see lifeless bodies of parents above their lifeless children, and then the reverse of this, children giving up life above their mothers and fathers.

And in no small measure that affliction streamed from the land into the town, brought thither by the sickening crowd of peasants meeting plague-

stricken from every side.

multaque per populi passim loca prompta viasque
languida semanimo cum corpore membra videres
horrida paedore et pannis cooperta perire,
1265 corporis inluvie, pelli super ossibus una,
ulceribus taetris prope iam sordeque sepulta.
omnia denique sancta deum delubra replebat
corporibus mors exanimis onerataque passim
cuncta cadaveribus caelestum templa manebant,
1270 hospitibus loca quae complerant aedituentes.
nec iam religio divom nec numina magni
pendebantur enim: praesens dolor exsuperabat.
nec mos ille sepulturae remanebat in urbe,
quo prius hic populus semper consuerat humari;
1275 perturbatus enim totus trepidabat et unus
quisque suum pro re cognatum maestus humabat.
multaque res subita et paupertas horrida suasit;
namque suos consanguineos aliena rogorum
insuper extracta ingenti clamore locabant
1280 subdebantque faces, multo cum sanguine saepe
rixantes, potius quam corpora desererentur,
inque aliis alium populum sepelire suorum
certantes; lacrimis lassi luctuque redibant;
inde bonam partem in lectum maerore dabantur;
1285 nec poterat quisquam reperiri, quem neque morbus
nec mors nec luctus temptaret tempore tali.

[1262] They would fill all places and buildings: wherefore all the more the heat would [destroy them and] thus close-packed death would pile them up in heaps.

Many bodies drawn forth by thirst and tumbled out along the street would lie extended by the fountains of water, the breath of life cut off from their too great delight in water; and over all the open places of the people and the streets you might see many limbs drooping with their half-lifeless body, foul with stench and covered with rags, perish away from filth of body, with nothing but skin on their bones, now nearly buried in noisome sores and dirt.

All the holy sanctuaries of the gods too death had filled with lifeless bodies, and all the temples of the heavenly powers in all parts stood burdened with carcasses: all which places the wardens had thronged with guests.

For now no longer the worship of the gods or their divinities were greatly regarded: so overmastering was the present affliction.

Nor did those rites of sepulture continue in force in the city, with which that pious folk had always been wont to be buried; for the whole of it was in dismay and confusion, and each man would sorrowfully bury as the present

moment allowed.

And the sudden pressure and poverty prompted to many frightful acts; thus with a loud uproar they would place their own kinsfolk upon the funeral piles of others, and apply torches, quarreling often with much bloodshed sooner than abandon the bodies.

THE END

The Biography



FR. POGGIO

Gian Francesco Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459), the Florentine and Roman scholar was responsible for rediscovering a great number of classical Latin manuscripts, including 'De rerum natura', the only surviving work by Lucretius.

LUCRETIUS by William Young Sellar



LUCRETIUS (Titus Lucretius Carus) (c. 98-55 B.C.), the great Latin didactic poet. Our sole information concerning his life is found in the brief summary of Jerome, written more than four centuries after the poet's death. Jerome followed, often carelessly, the accounts contained in the lost work of Suetonius *De Viris Illustribus*, written about two centuries after the death of Lucretius; and, although it is likely that Suetonius used the information transmitted by earlier grammarians, there is nothing to guide us to the original sources. According to this account the poet was born in 95 B.C.; he became mad in consequence of the administration of a love-philtre; and after composing several books in his lucid intervals, which were subsequently corrected by Cicero, he died by his own hand in the forty-fourth year of his age. Donatus states in his life of Virgil, a work also based on the lost work of Suetonius, that Lucretius died on the same day on which Virgil assumed the *toga virilis*, that is, in the seventeenth year of Virgil's life, and on the very day on which he was born, and adds that the consuls were the same, that is Cn. Pompeius Magnus and M. Licinius Crassus, consuls in 70 and again in 55. The statements cannot be perfectly reconciled; but we may say with certainty that Lucretius was born between 98 and 95 B.C., and died in 55 or 54. A single mention of his poem, the *De rerum natura* (which from the condition in which it has reached us may be assumed to have been published posthumously) in a letter of Cicero's to his brother Quintus, written early in 54 B.C., confirms the date given by Donatus as that of the poet's death. The statements of Jerome have been questioned or disbelieved on the ground of their intrinsic improbability. They have been regarded as a fiction invented later by the enemies of Epicureanism, with the view of discrediting the most powerful work ever produced by any disciple of that sect. It is more in conformity with ancient credulity than with modern science to attribute a permanent tendency to derangement to the accidental administration of any drug, however potent. A work characterized by such strength, consistency and continuity of thought is not likely to have been composed "in the intervals of madness" as Jerome says. Donatus, in mentioning the poet's death, gives no hint of the act of suicide. The poets of the Augustan age, who were deeply interested both in his philosophy and in his poetry, are entirely silent about the tragical story of his life. Cicero, by his professed antagonism to the doctrines of Epicurus, by his inadequate appreciation of Lucretius himself and by the indifference which he shows to other contemporary poets, seems to have been neither fitted for the task of correcting the unfinished work of a writer whose genius was so distinct from his own, nor likely to have cordially undertaken

such a task.

Yet these considerations do not lead to the absolute rejection of the story. The evidence afforded by the poem rather leads to the conclusion that the tradition contains some germ of fact. It is remarkable that in more than one passage of his poem Lucretius writes with extraordinary vividness of the impression produced both by dreams and by waking visions. It is true that the philosophy of Epicurus put great stress on these, as affording the explanation of the origin of supernatural beliefs. But the insistence with which Lucretius returns to the subject, and the horror with which he recalls the effects of such abnormal phenomena, suggest that he himself may have been liable to such hallucinations, which are said to be consistent with perfect sanity, though they may be the precursors either of madness or of a state of despair and melancholy. Other passages, where he describes himself as ever engaged, even in his dreams, on his task of inquiry and composition, produce the impression of an unrelieved strain of mind and feeling, which may have ended in some extreme reaction of spirit, or in some failure of intellectual power, that may have led him to commit suicide. But the strongest confirmation of the tradition is the unfinished condition in which the poem has reached us. The subject appears indeed to have been fully treated in accordance with the plan sketched out in the introduction to the first book. But that book is the only one which is finished in style and in the arrangement of its matter. In all the others, and especially in the last three, the continuity of the argument is frequently broken by passages which must have been inserted after the first draft of the arguments was written out. Thus, for instance, in his account of the transition from savage to civilized life, he assumes at v. 1011 the discovery of the use of skins, fire, &c., and the first beginning of civil society, and proceeds at 1028 to explain the origin of language, and then again returns, from 1090 to 1160, to speculate upon the first use of fire and the earliest stages of political life. These breaks in continuity show what might also be inferred from frequent repetitions of lines which have appeared earlier in the poem, and from the rough workmanship of passages in the later books, that the poem could not have received the final revision of the author. Nor is there any great difficulty in believing that Cicero edited it; the word "emendavit," need not mean more than what we call "preparing for press."

From the absence of any claim on the part of any other district of Italy to the honour of having given birth to Lucretius it is inferred that he was of purely Roman origin. No writer certainly is more purely Roman in personal character and in strength of understanding. His silence on the subject of Roman greatness and glory as contrasted with the prominence of these subjects in the poetry of men of provincial birth such as Ennius, Virgil and Horace, may be explained by the principle that familiarity had made the subject one of less wonder and novelty to him. The Lucretian *gens* to which he belonged was one of the oldest of the great Roman houses, nor do we hear of the name, as we do of other great family names, as being diffused over

other parts of Italy, or as designating men of obscure or servile origin. It may well be assumed that Lucretius was a member of the Roman aristocracy, belonging either to a senatorian or to one of the great equestrian families. If the Roman aristocracy of his time had lost much of the virtue and of the governing qualities of their ancestors, they showed in the last years before the establishment of monarchy a taste for intellectual culture which might have made Rome as great in literature as in arms and law. A new taste for philosophy had developed among members of the governing class during the youth of Lucretius, and eminent Greek teachers of the Epicurean sect settled at Rome at the same time, and lived on terms of intimacy with them. The inference that Lucretius belonged to this class is confirmed by the tone in which he addresses Gaius Memmius, a man of an eminent senatorian family, to whom the poem is dedicated. His tone is quite unlike that in which Virgil or even Horace addresses Maecenas. He addresses him as an equal; he expresses sympathy with the prominent part he played in public life, and admiration for his varied accomplishments, but on his own subject claims to speak to him with authority.

Although our conception of the poet's life is necessarily vague and meagre, yet his personal force is so remarkable and so vividly impressed on his poem, that we seem able to form a consistent idea of his qualities and characteristics. We know, for example, that the choice of a contemplative life was not the result of indifference to the fate of the world, or of any natural coldness or even calmness of temperament. In the opening lines of the second and third books we can mark the recoil of a humane and sensitive spirit from the horrors of the reign of terror which he witnessed in his youth, and from the anarchy and confusion which prevailed at Rome during his later years. We may also infer that he had not been through his whole career so much estranged from the social life of his day as he seems to have been in his later years. Passages in his poem attest his familiarity with the pomp and luxury of city life, with the attractions of the public games and with the pageantry of great military spectacles. But much the greater mass of the illustrations of his philosophy indicate that, while engaged on his poem he must have passed much of his time in the open air, exercising at once the keen observation of a naturalist and the contemplative vision of a poet. He seems to have found a pleasure, more congenial to the modern than to the ancient temperament, in ascending mountains or wandering among their solitudes (vi. 469, iv. 575). References to companionship in these wanderings, and the well-known description of the charm of a rustic meal (ii. 29) speak of kindly sociality rather than of any austere separation from his fellows.

Other expressions in his poem (e.g. iii. 10, &c.) imply that he was also a student of books. Foremost among these were the writings of Epicurus; but he had also an intimate knowledge of the philosophical poem of Empedocles, and at least an acquaintance with the works of Democritus, Anaxagoras, Heraclitus, Plato and the Stoical writers. Of other Greek prose writers he

knew Thucydides and Hippocrates; while of the poets he expresses in more than one passage the highest admiration of Homer, whom he imitated in several places. Next to Homer Euripides is most frequently reproduced by him. But his poetical sympathy was not limited to the poets of Greece. For his own countryman Ennius he expresses an affectionate admiration; and he imitates his language, his rhythm and his manner in many places. The fragments of the old tragedian Pacuvius and of the satirist Lucilius show that Lucretius had made use of their expressions and materials. In his studies he was attracted by the older writers, both Greek and Roman, in whose masculine temperament and understanding he recognized an affinity with his own.

His devotion to Epicurus seems at first sight more difficult to explain than his enthusiasm for Empedocles or Ennius. Probably he found in his calmness of temperament, even in his want of imagination, a sense of rest and of exemption from the disturbing influences of life; while in his physical philosophy he found both an answer to the questions which perplexed him and an inexhaustible stimulus to his intellectual curiosity. The combative energy, the sense of superiority, the spirit of satire, characteristic of him as a Roman, unite with his loyalty to Epicurus to render him not only polemical but intolerant and contemptuous in his tone toward the great antagonists of his system, the Stoics, whom, while constantly referring to them, he does not condescend even to name. With his admiration of the genius of others he combines a strong sense of his own power. He is quite conscious of the great importance and of the difficulty of his task; but he feels his own ability to cope with it.

It is more difficult to infer the moral than the intellectual characteristics of a great writer from the personal impress left by him on his work. Yet it is not too much to say that there is no work in any literature that produces a profounder impression of sincerity. No writer shows a juster scorn of all mere rhetoric and exaggeration. No one shows truer courage, not marred by irreverence, in confronting the great problems of human destiny, or greater strength in triumphing over human weakness. No one shows a truer humanity and a more tender sympathy with natural sorrow.

The peculiarity of the poem of Lucretius, that which makes it unique in literature, is that it is a reasoned system of philosophy, written in verse. The prosaic title *De Rerum Natura*, a translation of the Gr. *περὶ φύσεως*, implies the subordination of the artistic to a speculative motive. As in the case of nearly all the great works of Roman literary genius, the form of the poem was borrowed from the Greeks. The rise of speculative philosophy in Greece was coincident with the beginning of prose composition, and many of the earliest philosophers wrote in the prose of the Ionic dialect; others, however, and especially the writers of the Greek colonies in Italy and Sicily, expounded their systems in continuous poems composed in the epic hexameter. Most famous in connexion with this kind of poetry are Xenophanes and

Parmenides, the Eleatics and Empedocles of Agrigentum. The last was less important as a philosopher, but greater than the others both as a poet and a physicist. On both of these grounds he had a greater attraction to Lucretius. The fragments of the poem of Empedocles show that the Roman poet regarded that work as his model. In accordance with this model he has given to his own poem the form of a personal address, he has developed his argument systematically, and has applied the sustained impetus of epic poetry to the treatment of some of the driest and abstrusest topics. Many ideas and expressions of the Sicilian have been reproduced by the Roman poet; and the same tone of impassioned solemnity and melancholy seems to have pervaded both works. But Lucretius, if less original as a thinker, was probably a much greater poet than Empedocles. What chiefly distinguishes him from his Greek prototypes is that his purpose is rather ethical than purely speculative; the zeal of a teacher and reformer is more strong in him than even the intellectual passion of a thinker. His speculative ideas, his moral teaching and his poetical power are indeed interdependent on one another, and this interdependence is what mainly constitutes their power and interest. But of the three claims which he makes to immortality, the importance of his subject, his desire to liberate the mind from the bonds of superstition and the charm and lucidity of his poetry that which he himself regarded as supreme was the second. The main idea of the poem is the irreconcilable opposition between the truth of the laws of nature and the falsehood of the old superstitions. But, further, the happiness and the dignity of life are regarded by him as absolutely dependent on the acceptance of the true and the rejection of the false doctrine. In the Epicurean system of philosophy he believed that he had found the weapons by which this war of liberation could be most effectually waged. Following Epicurus he sets before himself the aim of finally crushing that fear of the gods and that fear of death resulting from it which he regards as the source of all the human ills. Incidentally he desires also to purify the heart from other violent passions which corrupt it and mar its peace. But the source even of these — the passions of ambition and avarice — he finds in the fear of death; and that fear he resolves into the fear of eternal punishment after death.

The selection of his subject and the order in which it is treated are determined by this motive. Although the title of the poem implies that it is a treatise on the "whole nature of things," the aim of Lucretius is to treat only those branches of science which are necessary to clear the mind from the fear of the gods and the terrors of a future state. In the two earliest books, accordingly, he lays down and largely illustrates the first principles of being with the view of showing that the world is not governed by capricious agency, but has come into existence, continues in existence, and will ultimately pass away in accordance with the primary conditions of the elemental atoms which, along with empty space, are the only eternal and immutable substances. These atoms are themselves infinite in number but limited in their varieties, and by their ceaseless movement and combinations during infinite

time and through infinite space the whole process of creation is maintained. In the third book he applies the principles of the atomic philosophy to explain the nature of the mind and vital principle, with the view of showing that the soul perishes with the body. In the fourth book he discusses the Epicurean doctrine of the images, which are cast from all bodies, and which act either on the senses or immediately on the mind, in dreams or waking visions, as affording the explanation of the belief in the continued existence of the spirits of the departed. The fifth book, which has the most general interest, professes to explain the process by which the earth, the sea, the sky, the sun, moon and stars, were formed, the origin of life, and the gradual advance of man from the most savage to the most civilized condition. All these topics are treated with the view of showing that the world is not itself divine nor directed by divine agency. The sixth book is devoted to the explanation, in accordance with natural causes, of some of the more abnormal phenomena, such as thunderstorms, volcanoes, earthquakes, &c., which are special causes of supernatural terrors.

The consecutive study of the argument produces on most readers a mixed feeling of dissatisfaction and admiration. They are repelled by the dryness of much of the matter, the unsuitableness of many of the topics discussed for poetic treatment, the arbitrary assumption of premises, the entire failure to establish the connexion between the concrete phenomena which the author professes to explain and these assumptions, and the erroneousness of many of the doctrines which are stated with dogmatic confidence. On the other hand, they are constantly impressed by his power of reasoning both deductively and inductively, by the subtlety and fertility of invention with which he applies analogies, by the clearness and keenness of his observation, by the fulness of matter with which his mind is stored, and by the consecutive force, the precision and distinctness of his style, when employed in the processes of scientific exposition. The first two books enable us better than anything else in ancient literature to appreciate the boldness and, on the whole, the reasonableness of the ancient mind in forming hypotheses on great matters that still occupy the investigations of physical science. The third and fourth books give evidence of acuteness in psychological analysis; the fourth and sixth of the most active and varied observation of natural phenomena; the fifth of original insight and strong common sense in conceiving the origin of society and the progressive advance of man to civilization. But the chief value of Lucretius as a thinker lies in his firm grasp of speculative ideas, and in his application of them to the interpretation of human life and nature. All phenomena, moral as well as material, are contemplated by him in their relation to one great organic whole, which he acknowledges under the name of "*Natura daedala rerum*," and the most beneficent manifestations of which he seems to symbolize and almost to deify in the "*Alma Venus*," whom, in apparent contradiction to his denial of a divine interference with human affairs, he invokes with prayer in the opening lines of the poem. In this

conception of nature are united the conceptions of law and order, of ever-changing life and interdependence, of immensity, individuality, and all-pervading subtlety, under which the universe is apprehended both by his intelligence and his imagination.

Nothing can be more unlike the religious and moral attitude of Lucretius than the old popular conception of him as an atheist and a preacher of the doctrine of pleasure. It is true that he denies the doctrines of a supernatural government of the world and of a future life. But his arguments against the first are really only valid against the limited and unworthy conceptions of divine agency involved in the ancient religions; his denial of the second is prompted by his vital realization of all that is meant by the arbitrary infliction of eternal torment after death. His war with the popular beliefs of his time is waged, not in the interests of licence, but in vindication of the sanctity of human feeling. The cardinal line of the poem,

“*Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum,*”

is elicited from him as his protest against the sacrifice of Iphigenia by her father. But in his very denial of a cruel, limited and capricious agency of the gods, and in his imaginative recognition of an orderly, all-pervading, all-regulating power, we find at least a nearer approach to the higher conceptions of modern theism than in any of the other imaginative conceptions of ancient poetry and art. But his conception even of the ancient gods and of their indirect influence on human life is more worthy than the popular one. He conceives of them as living a life of eternal peace and exemption from passion, in a world of their own; and the highest ideal of man is, through the exercise of his reason, to realize an image of this life. Although they are conceived of as unconcerned with the interest of our world, yet influences are supposed to emanate from them which the human heart is capable of receiving and assimilating. The effect of unworthy conceptions of the divine nature is that they render a man incapable of visiting the temples of the gods in a calm spirit, or of receiving the emanations that “announce the divine peace” in peaceful tranquillity. The supposed “atheism” of Lucretius proceeds from a more deeply reverential spirit than that of the majority of professed believers in all times.

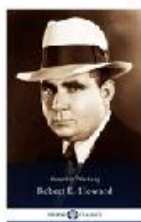
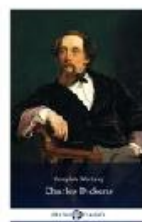
His moral attitude is also far removed from that of ordinary ancient Epicureanism or of modern materialism. Though he acknowledges pleasure to be the law of life, yet he is far from regarding its attainment as the end of life. What man needs is not enjoyment, but “peace and a pure heart.” The victory to be won by man is the triumph over fear, ambition, passion, luxury. With the conquest over these nature herself supplies all that is needed for happiness. Self-control and renunciation are the lessons which he preaches.

It has been doubted whether Cicero,^[1] in his short criticism in the letter already referred to, concedes to Lucretius both the gifts of genius and the

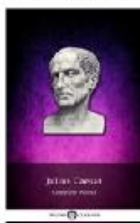
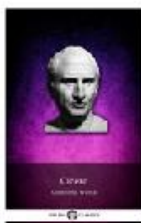
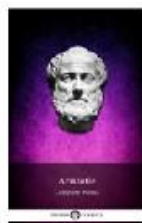
accomplishment of art or only one of them. Readers of a later time, who could compare his work with the finished works of the Augustan age, would certainly disparage his art rather than his power. But with Cicero it was different. He greatly admired, or professed to admire, the genius of the early Roman poets, while he shows indifference to the poetical genius of his younger contemporaries. Yet he could not have been insensible to the immense superiority in rhythmical smoothness which the hexameter of Lucretius has over that of Ennius and Lucilius. And no reader of Lucretius can doubt that he attached the greatest importance to artistic execution, and that he took a great pleasure, not only in “the long roll of his hexameter,” but also in producing the effects of alliteration, assonance, &c., which are so marked a peculiarity in the style of Plautus and the earlier Roman poets. He allows his taste for these tricks of style to degenerate into mannerism. And this is the only drawback to the impression of absolute spontaneity which his style produces. He was unfortunate in living before the natural rudeness of Latin art had been successfully grappled with. His only important precursors in serious poetry were Ennius and Lucilius, and, though he derived from the first of these an impulse to shape the Latin tongue into a fitting vehicle for the expression of elevated emotion and imaginative conception, he could find in neither a guide to follow in the task he set before himself. The difficulty and novelty of his task enhances our sense of his power. His finest passages are thus characterized by a freshness of feeling and enthusiasm of discovery. But the result of these conditions and of his own inadequate conception of the proper limits of his art is that his best poetry is clogged with a great mass of alien matter, which no treatment in the world could have made poetically endurable. (W. Y. S.)

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Rome — likely to be where Lucretius spent his final days